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© RYAN MACKENNA

COMMENT

I must admit I felt a little sad when Bry Mac filled us in on his impending retirement last month. I knew it was coming but I still wasn't ready for it when he dropped the bombshell. I totally respect his decision though – and perhaps even more so his reasons behind it all – but it's still a shame that he'll no longer be at all the races in 2017.

Retirement is nothing new in motocross and I can't count how many racers have dropped by the wayside over the years. I think what makes it worse for me now is that some of the pro level riders who are calling it quits due to old age weren't even born when I started racing!

As an example I fully remember seeing Stephen Sword tear it up on a KX60 when I was first staring out and he's been retired for bloody years now even after putting in a long and illustrious shift. Do you have any idea how old that makes me feel?

I mentioned a month or so back how years ending in six have always been pretty cool for me. I was too young to remember anything at all in 1976 but '86 was the year DT won the 500cc world championship and also the year that Belle Vue hosted an awesome SX event, '96 the year I made my AMCA championship debut, 2006 the year I took my first – and only – shot at a Maxxis round and the Red Bull Romaniacs and 2016 was the year that I barely stepped away from my desk, ate loads and got dead fat #winning!

Thinking back to the last time I made such huge weight gains actually coincides with a really crappy Bry Mac story that I believe played a major part in my contract with Kawasaki's PR department not getting renewed.

The year was 2008 and Ray Archer – who I was working with at the time as well as doing my day job with DBR

– had been given the task of shooting the images for the 2009 KX-F line of literature. It was my job to provide all the buzz words and whatnot while Bry Mac and Rich Lawson had been signed up to provide the action. The whole project was overlooked by one of Kawasaki Motors Europe's marketing managers and this complete tool of an art director who just happened to look exactly like Ralph Wiggum and had eerily similar mannerisms too.

Anyhoo, Bry, Rich and I spent the whole week quoting Ralph Wiggum classics from The Simpsons to the point where we couldn't keep our sh*t together whenever 'Ralph' was anywhere near us. The worst thing about it all was the fact that the Dutch – not exactly a nation renowned for having any sense of humour – KME guy barely left Ralph's side and thought we were laughing at him. It was definitely awkward...

And although I tried my hardest to explain the score, if you didn't already know what was so funny then you never would and although the 2009 KX-F range sold out in record time – totally because of my marketing bumpf I'd best add – I never got asked back to promote the 2010 range. By then Bry and the Twisted 7 boys were Honda mounted in their day jobs anyway so that was them out of a job too.

So, me get fired because of Bry Mac? That's impossible...



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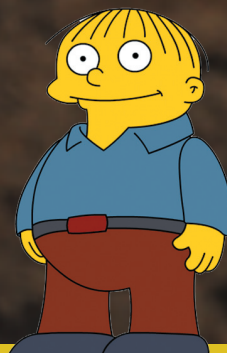
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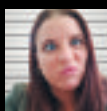
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TONY

CAIROLI



TONY ENDS THE YEAR ON A HIGH AND INVITES EVERYONE DOWN TO MAGGIORA FOR THE MXON . . .

Dear DBR readers, I'm just getting ready to fly from the USA back to Amsterdam after spending 14 days in the States with Jill and my team for the last two rounds of the MXGP series.

Straight after Assen we flew to Charlotte in North Carolina to a new track built inside a dirt oval next to the huge NASCAR circuit. Unfortunately it rained in the run up to this event so the organisers decided to cancel the practice runs and qualification races on Friday to try and keep the track in good condition for Saturday's main races. I have to say that they did an incredible job of prepping the track and nobody was expecting it to be that good after seeing all the flooding.

Unfortunately for me I headed to Charlotte not feeling so good. The day after Assen I got a sore throat and felt fatigued making the flight over horrible for me. During practice I could feel my fever rising and although I took some medication I didn't feel at all like myself on the bike and very drained.

It was a shame to travel so far for such bad results because I really wanted to challenge Tim to the very end of the series but it ended up being one of my worst races of the season.

After Charlotte we headed to California and after a few days on antibiotics I started to feel a little bit better. We were able to drive to San Diego to see a nuclear submarine and also

went to Little Italy where we tracked down a good plate of pasta!

After the quality downtime I was happy to get back on the bike and do some training and testing on a nice SoCal track. I also took time to visit the American headquarters of AXO which was nice.

Finally we went to Glen Helen to try and end my season on a high. I love that circuit and particularly like the big hills – up and down! I have some very good memories of the place – my favourite being in 2010 when I won the race stuck in third gear.

Moving back to the present and it was nice to find that the track was very well prepared. I put in two solid races to end the year on the podium and in second place in the championship standings. I'm actually pretty happy about that when you consider how much I struggled at the start of the year with the injuries I picked up in the winter.

My target is to always be world champion and in the past 13 years I've been champion eight times and finished in the top three a further three times winning at least one moto each year. That's not such a bad record to have...

In the last race of the year I had a nice battle with the new world champion Tim Gajser. Although I beat him on the day he rode consistently all year and proved to be the top

rider. I can't wait until next year to restart the challenge.

Before we left the track we met up to swap jerseys – I think that's the way every sporting competition should end with the opponents able to shake hands and congratulate each other. Tim and I were rivals chasing the same goal but we showed several times through the year that we could fight clean and always showed each other respect.

My next race is the Motocross of Nations at Maggiora. This will be a huge event as it's 30 years since the famous battle there back in 1986. Although it's the same venue and the spirit will be the similar the teams, riders and bikes are very different. The Nations is always a very special race so buy a ticket and come down to Italy to cheer the British team on. It will be a superb show and one that sticks in your memory for many years to come!

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BRYAN

MACKENZIE



IN ATTEMPT TO GET KARMA OFF HIS BACK IRN BRY COMES CLEAN ABOUT A THING OR TWO...

A friend and I were chatting recently and from that chat an idea was spawned as to what my last column as a pro dirt bike racer was going to be – we're running with a 'My Name is Earl' vibe. Basically, as my time here is up I want to leave on good terms and that goes for with karma, too, so I have a couple of small things I've done through my career that I feel really bad for that I'd like to clean up and acknowledge – or apologise for.

Firstly I want to apologise to myself and settle a score that I feel real sh*tty about. I want to apologise for thinking it was a good idea to wildcard race an MXGP at Lierop. In 2012 Steve Turner from STR asked if I would like to wildcard three MXGP rounds at the end of the season, starting with Lierop. I accepted but shortly after regretted it.

I think I took five years off my riding career in that one weekend and I definitely used up a couple of lives. That place could be used as a form of modern era war torture – make them race around Lierop twice! It's such a brutal race and I urge anyone given the option to give it plenty of thought. You may lose your spleen through eating an unhealthy amount of sand although after 30 minutes of riding round there the sand starts to taste pretty darn good.

I also need to come clean and apologise to my dad for something I did back in 1994, too. We were at Desertmartin for the (back then it was called) ACU British Youth Nationals when I went out and had a howler of a moto. Even in those days I didn't like losing so when I didn't win I went back to the van absolutely tamping, cocked my leg and pulled the trigger on it blowing a massive hole in the kitchenette unit of the camper. Instant regret. The water works came on like I had just set my nine year-old moustache on fire as I knew I was in for it. I made up a cock-and-bull story that I fell while standing on the couch and when I took a step back I put my heel through it – that was a lie dad and I'm sorry about that.

And my good pal Stefan Potato. Stefan has

been a friend of mine for over a decade and is widely known around the pits for being the only gay in the motocross village – although he says he knows otherwise. But he has put up with, and dished out, his fair share of teasing over the years – mostly coming from my direction but it's all been in good fun. I just wanted Mr Karma to know that, as I'm sure Stefano already does.

I also feel really bad about sometimes trying to push ex paddock and race co-ordinator – and top fella – Chris Sprawson to breaking point. Chris was like Hitler at the Maxxis British Championship and his strict regime meant the events would run faultlessly year after year. Chris' real baby at the events was the waiting zone though and he made it so cut throat that you daren't be a second late.

While in the waiting zone it was a dead engine affair with silence of bikes until he blew his whistle on an exact minute in time. But often was the case that someone would fire their bike up early – before the whistle – and an eruption of noise with bikes following suit would see Chris melt down trying to regain order. We used to do this occasionally just to see how mental we could make him go. It wasn't big and it wasn't clever but it sure was funny.

I guess I should apologise to BC for his grey hair as well. I don't take any responsibility for its length or lack of style but I feel partly responsible for testing his patience for 12 years so that it changed colour. In fact, I reckon that maybe gets voided out though because of how much he pushes my buttons. The more I think about it where's my apology?

Once I was given the holeshot money from the Scottish Championship when I knew myself that I never actually got the holeshot. I could have been taking the proverbial food out of a child's mouth but I stuck it in the tail anyway. I feel guilty about that now. In hindsight the chips on the way home probably should have tasted bitter that night but were masked by the delights of salt and sauce.

And I hate to admit it but I could sometimes be the guy who shouts at lappers. When racing

in Scotland or practicing I never do it because I appreciate those guys are literally just out enjoying their day. But when I would race at the Maxxis, Masters, Nationals etc it's an intense affair with a lot at stake so I couldn't help but blast my horn when I felt I needed to. But I do understand that they are probably just trying to enjoy their day and live the dream like the rest of us so feel pretty bad about it now.

It's no news that Neville Bradshaw and I had an intense rivalry for many years as we both tried to reign supreme on the domestic MX2 scene. Pre-2010 Nev and I had beef and we didn't talk but we didn't really race with each other much, either. Then one day at Lyng in 2010 it came to a head when I, admittedly, forced the issue way too hard and virtually chopped him in half like a high speed magician. Honestly, he probably won't believe me, but I didn't intentionally take him down but I definitely picked a point in the dirt and committed to it and just made sure I got there first. He wasn't shy in telling me what he thought about it, too.

Anyway we met up later at Ando's wedding and after a couple of drinks to loosen up we buried the bad blood and from then on we raced above board and consistently harder than the last time. It was a sick rivalry to be apart of and one that the industry followed somewhat, and I have the most respect for the guy as an athlete and a racer – probably my toughest competitor. But I really do feel sh*t for that day back in 2010 because it ended his day and I genuinely apologise for it...

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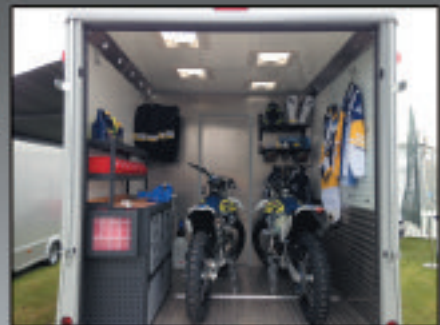
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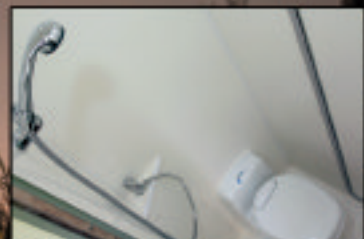
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A photograph of Steve Holcombe, a British enduro rider, celebrating his victory at the 2016 Enduro 3 World Championship. He is wearing a red, white, and blue racing suit with 'Beta RACING' and 'E3' logos. He is holding a yellow number 1 plate high in the air with his right hand. Two men, likely his parents, are standing next to him, smiling. The background shows a red and white Beta racing trailer with a large number 1 on it. The text 'STEVE' is overlaid in a blue box on the left side of the image.

STEVE

HOLCOMBE

HE'S ONLY GONE AND DONE IT. LADIES AND GENTLE PLEASE BE UPSTANDING FOR YOUR 2016 ENDURO 3 WORLD CHAMPION...

Job done! After almost two months of waiting and plenty of anxious moments I've finally done what I set out to do way back at the start of the Enduro World Championship – win the Enduro 3 title. It feels incredible.

I'd be lying if I said I hadn't started to feel the pressure in the last few weeks but now that the championship is mine I'm able to relax and enjoy things. Thanks to a lot of hard work from a lot of great people I'm proud to say I'm a British Enduro World Champion – the 2016 Enduro 3 World Champion.

It's a strange feeling, knowing that you're a world champion. But an awesome feeling all the same. As much as my goal was to win the Enduro 3 World Championship this season the one thing I wanted more than anything else this year was also the one thing I've not let myself think about. If that make sense?

Becoming an Enduro World Champion is kind of a surreal feeling right now. I've had a few days to let it sink in, but it still feels strange. But strange in a good way. I guess no one is ever really ready for the huge sense of relief they feel when they finally achieve what they've set out to do.

Despite the nerves the final round of the world championship in France was a truly amazing few days. Taking in the madness and chaos of the French event wasn't always easy as I was obviously focused on doing what I needed to do to win the title, but nonetheless

it's certainly a few days that I'll remember for a long, long time to come.

What made it so special was the fact that there was a good load of Brits in Cahors cheering me on as well as my parents. Having my mum and dad there to enjoy the whole weekend was awesome. There are a number of people that I work closely with nowadays who help me do what I do but just like with every other rider it's my parents who have done more than any others to help get me to where I am today. Thanks Mum. Thanks Dad.

As for the race, things went well. I won the E3 class on both days but I wasn't able to get as good an overall result as I hoped. But to be honest I'm not at all bothered about that. There was no way I was going to go all out in the hope of winning the overall EnduroGP title, although I did have a slim chance, and risk throwing away months of hard work. I'll be gunning for the EnduroGP title next year.

The hot, dry conditions were certainly different to what we've had at most rounds of the series this year. It certainly made for a more enjoyable weekend for those who were there watching. I rode well enough but with the title within reach it took a little while to feel settled on day one. It's done now, I've got the title, so I'm not going to over analyse the way I rode.

For obvious reasons it's been hard to see beyond the final round of the world championship but now that box is ticked I've got other business to attend to. By the time you

read this I'll have raced the penultimate round of the British champs and if things go well I'll hopefully have secured my first British title, too.

After that, I'm not exactly sure. I'll certainly be taking things a little easier in the coming weeks. But with the BEC event and most likely a trip over to Italy to catch up with everyone at the Beta factory it's going to be while until I can really chill out properly. My guess is I'm going to find it hard to chillax and do nothing after all the charging around in recent weeks.

One thing that was really cool in France was the number of Brits doing well. I think there were more British riders among the top three in each class than riders from any other nation and with plenty of young riders doing well the future looks pretty good.

I want to end my ramblings this month by saying thanks – thanks to everyone who's supported me this year. Reading all the messages people have left on my social media channels is awesome – I really do appreciate it. Thanks everyone, your support's been awesome.

Ciao for now.

Steve Holcombe #70

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DANIEL

GROVE

OUR CHEST-PROTECTOR-OVER-THE-SHIRT WEARING PROTAGONIST WAXES LYRICAL ABOUT THE ACERBIS AMATEUR NATIONALS...

If you're a regular reader of my columns you'll know that I knocked racing on the head for this year and I didn't sign up for a series for the first time since 2005 when I was ripping about on the AMCA scene. So this year was a little bit monumental for me but I felt that my time had come and I'd entered my fair share of races over the last decade to get my stamp as a motocross 'racer' and not someone that likes to win at practice tracks week in week out.

As this year's gone on though I've been really missing the racing scene and since getting my back sorted I've been getting myself back behind a start gate fairly regularly and giving my Leatt 4.5 chest protector a thorough test to see how it handles roost. Luckily for me it's an awesome piece of kit. It's similar to a helmet in the fact that it features a hard shell with cushioning underneath and the front of it has kept my ribs and chest safe as it's safe to say that my start's haven't improved with my time off!

Speaking of chest protectors/body armour, I've noticed so many racers run theirs over their shirt like I like to do so I'm down with the kids for an old 'un and as the editor of this magazine hates armour on top photos he's gonna have to get used to it for a little while longer (unless I decide to get all Lord Sugar on yo' ass – Suttly) because I think it looks cool. It's definitely AMA National style as you may have noticed this year and whatever the racers run over there is certifiably cool.

Last month I was fortunate to race at Farleigh Castle when the Acerbis Nationals visited there and I had an awesome time. It kinda took me back to my AMCA days as the track wasn't ripped up, littered with jumps and it had plenty of off-camber corners. I could honestly race on tracks like this every weekend.

If this was the case I'd get back to racing in an instant but times are changing and classic tracks like Farleigh are few and far between and Farleigh itself is only used a handful of times a year. I'm not a huge fan of two day meetings – just because I don't have a

camper or caravan – but as it was so local and it was summer I was able to pop home and then return the next day, ideal.

Not all Acerbis National rounds are two days and I did consider signing up for a few earlier rounds that were on one day earlier in the season but for one reason or another it didn't happen. After my time at Farleigh though I'm swaying towards signing up for a full season as the weekend was that good for me. Not results wise, I was just happy with my riding and riding on a nice wide track as well as my fitness as my best lap time all weekend was on the last lap of a race on day two.

Once signed on it was down to the business of racing and as my race was later on in the block I had time to check out a few of the other classes that are featured in the programme. The series is self labelled as the country's premier amateur championship and I completely agree. There were no big names there and there is a class for everyone from vets to novices (labelled as the open Juniors) and everything in between including two-strokes!

I was excited to see the 125 race and if you're not old enough to remember taking part in an all 125 race then you've sadly missed out on a truly golden time of motocross racing. I think the MXY2 class at the Maxxis should only allow 125 two-strokes but that's a story for another day.

Watching the 125 race brought back some memories and it was like watching a train as the riders were all so closely matched and there was passing going on everywhere. The straight before the woods was a good spot to watch as it was like a slow motion drag race with the noise and not a huge amount of speed which was cool to watch.

There's even a ladies race which is now the UK's only women's motocross championship however they went out with the 250 two-strokes using a second gate drop to separate them for most of the race. I thought there was enough for them to have their

own race but I guess it saved an hour in the day by combining the two classes so I can understand why it was done. They do this at amateur races in America so it's not an awful idea.

The team running the event certainly know how to get through the programme and both days I was out of there by 4:30 which is how all motocross events should be. I parked up somewhere different in the pits for the Sunday and on one side I had a guy from Cumbria and on the other side was a guy from Scotland! So it's safe to say that the series pulls in riders from all over as there were also a few different accents to be heard around the pits and some familiar faces from when I raced the series in 2010 and 2011.

The series has come a long way since then – it's certainly slicker as mentioned and Darren Hudson who's the main man behind the series is on the tannoy advising what race was next to keep things moving along.

So at this year's International Dirt Bike Show I think I'll be visiting the Acerbis Nationals stand to complete a registration form and get myself back in the swing of racing again as this meeting was the turning point for me this year as I enjoyed it that much I've taken in a few more races since. The series visits some classic and modern tracks including a couple of sand tracks which you don't get in the south so that would add some variety to the tracks that I'd ride.

I can't see myself doing all the rounds but I certainly plan on taking on the one day events and both days at Farleigh again as it's just awesome! Plus there aren't many chances to race modern bikes around there which certainly helped fill every start gate of every race when the Acerbis Nationals passed through last month...

Daniel Grove



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JAKE NICHOLLS



OUR RC RACE CAR ADDICT HEADS TO THE STATES FOR TWO MX GPS, A NASCAR RACE AND TO GIVE HIS CONTROL STICKS PLENTY OF, ERM, STICK...

This season has absolutely flown by which is a good thing. It's also good that members of our team feel the same way – means they've been enjoying themselves as much as I have. As the season comes to a close I must admit I'm ready for a little break both mentally and physically although recently it's been a bit more towards needing a rest physically. This is mainly due to having a really big crash in the first practice at Assen where I landed on the edge of a landing going quite fast. The bike stopped in the sand and threw me straight to the ground and I landed really awkwardly on my upper back. I sat out the rest of the session and for a while I thought it was my season done as my back was burning so bad and I was slightly in shock.

I took some anti-inflammatories and kept moving as I knew if I lay down I would seize up. I managed to see out the rest of the day although very gingerly which is how my team-mate Mel Pocock normally does things. To my surprise I wasn't that bad when I woke up on Sunday morning although I had a really sore rib just under my shoulder blade.

I got on okay in the races though. The first race was like an enduro after all the rain and I crashed early on otherwise I think I could have had a decent result as I was riding well in the tricky conditions. Second race I lined up on gate 40 and went for the big holey – and nearly got it – but ran wide and off the track. I joined in about 15th and rode decent to get into 11th. The track was much better after they worked on it for race two and I finished 13th.

I was glad to leave there in one piece as the crash on Saturday did shake me up a bit as it happened so quickly. And this is where things got interesting. Steve Fry, Steve Henderson and I jumped in Mr Fry's camper with my race bike and drove – well, Mr Fry did – through the night all the way to Petersfield for the Bank Holiday Monday Ken Hill International at Langrish.

We got on a train at 3am and arrived at the track at 5am. I got a bit of sleep but not a lot. I had a fun day racing there although I was pretty dazed by the end of it. I lead the first race until I stalled the bike and was coming back to the leader when they red flagged it due to a crash. In the final race I crashed on lap one and took my time coming through in the first 10 minutes as the dust was pretty bad. I got through to ninth until I sheared an engine bolt with four laps to go and then it was like riding a Maico there was that much vibration. After the race I drove

home from there with my mate Tom who kindly drove down in the morning in my van and watched the action.

We got home at 9:30pm and immediately started packing for America because we had to leave at 5am the next morning for my practice bike mechanic Barry to drop us off at Heathrow. It was all a bit hectic as I was away in Holland the whole week before Assen and the week before that I'd raced up in Preston where I had a half decent day. I fought for the win with Simpson in the opening race before starting to feel a bit off in the second race. I struggled with bike set-up a lot but it was also the start of me feeling like my physical condition was tailing off slightly after a long season.

Anyhow, we arrived in Charlotte, North Carolina on Tuesday afternoon. Charlotte is on the east coast of America, a few hours north of Florida. It's pretty redneck when you get out of the suburbs and I quite liked it – proper NASCAR country. All the NASCAR teams are based around there.

The next day Ian Browne and Sam Yates – who had both come out to mechanic for me – got picked up by one of Sam's father's employees who is based out there and they drove to a dealer a couple hours away where we were hiring a bike from. So in the meantime Blu and I went for a drive around and did some sight seeing. On our way we stumbled across an indoor RC track and shop – totally by coincidence LOL – that was owned and run by a top Rallycross driver Scott Speed and a top NASCAR driver called TJ Bell.

Anyway I got chatting to them and I mentioned that I had brought one of my 10th scale trucks with me and that I was up for a drive. Next thing I was heading back there that evening and racing one of their local rounds – it was pretty good fun with nice people. I also ended up going back there again with Romain Febvre as we were both bored due to qualifying being cancelled on Friday due to a bad storm.

The race day there was okay, Justin and crew did a good job getting the track back to normal after the rain we had. It was a very one line, fast type of track. In the first one I was behind Wilson the whole race and should have passed him but my hand guard was broken so every time he roosted me it pushed the guard into my front brake and I had to use my left hand to push it away – very frustrating. I finished 17th – it was a very weird race and everyone struggled I think. The second one I got a better start and

was up there on the first lap but then the seat bolt sheared randomly and my seat came off. That was the race over.

The next day I found out that there was a NASCAR race on two hours south in South Carolina so I said I was going and Blu came along. It was two hours into the middle of nowhere but when we arrived there were about 80,000 people there watching it. What an experience! It's changed my outlook on NASCAR as I thought it was boring and I guess it is on TV but it was so good live – even Blu was into it. The noise and speed was just something else.

We flew to LA the next day and I spent a few days in Newport Beach which was nice. Throughout the whole trip I really struggled with my rib so I was only able to lightly jog for training which was a bummer. We spent a day at universal studios with Tommy Searle and his partner Sophia. It was nice to spend time with them as we always have a laugh but I hate anything like that so I was just along for the ride to please Blu – much to my delight she thought it was a bit pants too.

They dropped me off with all my RC gear at a local track in Orange County where I raced for the evening. People laugh at me but it's my hobby so why not? It's that or spend another afternoon/night in the hotel feeling bored. There were loads of people there who are from MX too – it seems to kinda fit in with it over there and not seen as a geek fest quite as much as here.

Glen Helen was as awesome as I remember. I love the track. Sunday went okay. I had a bad start in the first race and a weird sleepy spell mid-race meant I only managed a 17th and then in the second race I got a good start and was running 11th but I just had no energy. Another sign that my body is a bit worn out...

I know it's the same for everyone in the GPs so I'm not making excuses but our bodies are all different too and I haven't completed a full season since 2013. I would like to say a massive thank you to Roger Magee for sending me and the team out there – it was an awesome opportunity and I appreciate it a lot. Also a big thanks to Ian and Sam for coming out and working hard for me. I wish I could have given them a better show at GH but I honestly had nothing to give.

Cheers for reading...

MAYHEM BLOCKER

army green/black



red/blue



black/hi-viz



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CHAMPIONSHIPS SETTLED, RUMOURS DEBUNKED AND MORE INFORMATION THAN YOU CAN SHAKE A SHIFTY STICK AT...

So Tim Gajser reigned supreme in MXGP this season in his rookie year on the big bike lifting the championship one round early at the first of the two US GPs. Gajser had an impressive debut season on a 450 landing on the overall podium 16 out of 18 rounds and becoming the youngest ever champion of the premier class.

Almost one year ago he won the MX2 world title at the final round in Glen Helen only days after turning 19 and this year scooped the 450 title while still 19-years-old – days before turning 20. N-n-n-n-nineteen has been a good age for Timmy G, clearly. He has made it no secret that his heart lies at competing in the US in future but current team manager Giacomo Gariboldi has confirmed that Tim will remain with his team for the next four years.

In MX2 Jeffrey Herlings closed out his 250F – 'Lites' career as he insisted on calling it after spending two weeks in America – after a remarkable seven seasons. 'The Bullet' competed 15 rounds this season winning 14 en route to his third MX2 world title. During this time Jeffrey has amassed 60 overall GP wins and still has his eyes set on beating Stefan Everts' standard set at 101 GP wins.

Now moving up to MXGP on a 450, Herlings will be hoping to be the third rookie in succession to lift the 450 championship in his first season like Febvre and Gajser have just done before him. But of late he has put himself in doubt for the MXoN insisting he needs some time to start testing on the 450 and has a couple of issues to sort out with the Dutch Federation before the event in Maggiora, Italy.

The Glen Helen MXGP marked the debut of former two-time AMA National Lites Champion Jeremy Martin for the Geico Honda Team. Geico have netted Martin for the 2017 and '18 seasons which will see him ride a CRF250R in the 250 class in year one and move to a Honda CRF450R full time in 2018. Already comfortable on the bike, Jezzer went second twice at GH behind Jeffrey Herlings after only a couple of weeks with red plastic under him.

The championship seasons are done and dusted the world over but fret not there are still some highly anticipated one-off events ready to blow a load of motocross protein into your eyes. The MXoN in Maggiora is coming around on the 25th of September, followed by the new Supermotocross (SMX) Cup on October 8 along with Weston Beach Race that same weekend. They'll be chased up by the Monster Energy Cup in Vegas one week later. Oh, and don't forget the annual Stoneleigh Dirt Bike Show on October 27-30.

So what is this SMX I speak of? In case you haven't heard it's a new event organised by Youthstream which they are calling Supermotocross. It's a unique racing concept targeted to entice average Joe public – along with the die-hard race fan – as it takes place in the Veltins Arena, home of the famous German football club FC Schalke, putting motocross right in the centre of their day-to-day lives.

The theory is to hold a 'motocross race in a stadium' giving 100 per cent easy-to-follow viewing and involves the seven manufacturers who compete in the FIM Motocross World Championship. Each motorcycle brand will line

up a four rider squad – three main riders and one 'joker' who can replace one of the main riders at any time. Each manufacturer will enter three riders in three races during the event and the best seven results from nine will count towards the manufacturers' title.

And the manufacturers are taking it very seriously in its inaugural year as the field is stacks high –
Team KTM: Ryan Dungey, Marvin Musquin, Jeffrey Herlings
Team HRC: Tim Gajser, Gautier Paulin and Evgeny Bobryshev
Team Husqvarna: Max Nagl, Jason Anderson, Zach Osborne
Team Kawasaki: Tommy Searle, Clement Desalle, Jordi Tixier
Team Suzuki: Jeremy Seewer, Arminas Jasikonis, Jake Weimer
Team Yamaha: Romain Febvre, Justin Barcia, Brent van Doninck, Benoit Paturel

Clement Desalle has always been a fearful figure on any start line but had a pretty quiet year aboard the factory Kawasaki in 2016. A pre-season injury started his campaign slowly and he never gained full momentum to feature in the championship hunt but did have a season high in Assen with the overall GP victory. However, his injury hit season continued into the final round as he withdrew with a knee injury and with the Nations looming Belgium's butt will be puckering as they will need a full strength team – which includes Desalle – to have any chance of winning the event.

Kawasaki Racing Team (CLS) have



Jeffrey Herlings signs off his 250F career with victory in Glen Helen



AUSSIE RULES!

MATT PHILLIPS CROWNED ENDUROGP CHAMPION

After eight rounds and 16 days of racing it was Sherco's Aussie ace Matt Phillips who ended the 2016 Enduro World Championship with the biggest smile by becoming this year's overall EnduroGP champion.

Entering the final round of the series in France with a comfortable cushion over rivals Eero Remes (TM), Steve Holcombe (Beta) and Matthias Bellino (Husqvarna), Phillips had enough in hand to seal the deal.

Riding to a 5-4 result in Cahors, Phillips claimed the title, along with the Enduro 2 class championship to deliver a major win for Sherco.

With the battle for the remainder of the podium positions going right down to the wire, Cahors saw a serious reshuffle with Bellino jumping from fourth to runner-up by the close of business. Holcombe nabbed third overall, despite a double DNF during the season – oh, what could have been! – while Remes lost most, slipping to fourth.



Steve Holcombe clinches the Enduro 3 world title



announced their rider line up for the MX2 World Championship for the 2017 season and it officially has some British flavour. Adam Sterry will team up with Petar Petrov to attack the MX2 World Championship for the next three years which will take him to the end of his MX2 timeline. My best buddy and long-term mechanic, BC, is going to work for the factory backed Kawasaki team as Adam's UK-based practice mechanic, too.

Steve Dixon of the UK-based DRT Kawasaki team had a nightmare this season trying to get his Russian MX2 entrant, Vsevolod Brylyakov into the UK to compete in the domestic series due to visa problems. Hoping to rectify it for next season as he keep the Russian, Dixon is pairing him with young American Darian Sanayei who finished second in this year's EMX250 championship. Tommy Searle was also initially expected to stay with the team but rumour has it he is in talks with 24MX Honda based in Belgium.

So where is Shaun Simpson going? After finishing the MXGP season top-10 in points, Simmo is rumoured to be riding for a new Wilvo Yamaha team based in Belgium. Currently Wilvo title sponsor the Standing Construct Yamaha team and initially it was thought he was going there but word is that



Mr Wilvo is actually setting up a team of his own away from the tie-in with Standing Construct and taking Aleksandr Tonkov with him. Shaun is no stranger to the Yamaha as he rode for the JK Datch team temporarily in 2013 and even won the final round of the MXGP series in Lierop in that time.

Martin Barr has had a memorable season on the Buildbase Honda team. A deal that was put together on the 11th hour after his own KTM team lost backing prior to the season starting, Barty repaid the faith team manager Dave Thorpe showed in him by bagging two championships this season – the Pirelli British Masters MX2 championship and most recently the Michelin MX Nationals MX2 championship. In fact, Barty only lost two motos in the whole of the MX Nationals championship claiming every overall win in the season. To top it off he has once again been chosen to represent Team Ireland at this year's MXoN too and signed an extension to his Buildbase Honda contract into 2017.

Hitachi Revo Husqvarna – that's Roger Magee's team – is to return to the orange side of the family next season as they switch from Husky back to spearhead KTM UK's efforts. Apparently KTM and Husky are cutting back on their team support for >>



ROOKIE TERROR!

NATHAN WATSON IS ENDUROGP'S BRIGHTEST NEWCOMER...

Proving gambles pay off, Nathan Watson has been awarded EnduroGP's Rookie of the Year title for 2016.

Making the switch from MXGP to EnduroGP a successful one, Watson ended his first season in enduro fifth overall and just nine points shy of becoming the Enduro 1 World Champion. More than just a fast learner, Watson has been consistently in the hunt for top honours throughout the season, whatever the weather and conditions.

With 15 E1 podium results from 16 starts and five wins, those stats will be hard to beat. And indicates that the KTM rider will be a heavy favourite for title honours during 2017.

Making it an E1 British 2-3, Husqvarna's Danny McCanney joined him on the podium for third. In a year of improvement for Danny, the Manxman consistently grew stronger and stronger during each round as he recovered from a serious knee injury.

Plagued by injury in 2016, Jamie McCanney made his return to action in France. With an E1 third on day one he didn't disappoint. A healthy Jamie in 2017, will be a very fast one.



BAR-TO-BAR!

COLTON HAAKER AND CODY WEBB ALMOST INSEPARABLE IN ENDUROCROSS POINTS CHASE...

The 2016 AMA EnduroCross Championship is in full swing with both Colton Haaker and Cody Webb leading the way.

Getting underway during the final weekend of August, this year's series sees eight rounds crammed into three months making for an intense and hectic schedule.

Three rounds in and at the front of the field, Haaker hangs onto the overall lead by one point with Webb second. Haaker has two wins to Webb's one with the duo battling it out for the win in every main event final so far. Mike Brown is third overall with Geoff Aaron fourth and Ty Tremaine fifth.

Despite a podium result at round one, Taddy Blazusiak has failed to finish the finals at rounds two and three.

HOT DATES!

2017 AX TOUR ANNOUNCED

The 2017 Arenacross Tour promises to be the best yet as a revamped race format and massive prize fund will surely tempt the biggest names in the indoor game to come and scrap it out in six of the UK's best arenas for points, prize money and ultimately pride in this seven round series.

"For decades the UK motocross world was starved of a consistent and professional indoor race series," says AX promoter Matt Bates. "I'm proud to say that when we complete our fifth consecutive year, having paid almost half a million pounds in prize money and attracted almost 200,000 fans since we started, we have one of the best indoor series in the world and it can expand way beyond our imagination. We offer bucket loads of exposure to the industry and a chance for 'professional' riders to earn a living from racing dirt bikes."

We'll have more on the Tour changes next month – as well as news about some of the teams and athletes involved – but believe us when we say they're definitely gonna mix things up and make the series even more exciting. Until then feast your eyes on the dates and venues below and then go buy some tickets before the best ones get sold out...

January 7 – Manchester Arena, Manchester
January 14 – The SSE Hydro Arena, Glasgow
January 21 – The Genting Arena, Birmingham
January 27 – The SSE Arena, Belfast
January 28 – The SSE Arena, Belfast
February 11 – Sheffield Arena, Sheffield
February 18 – The SSE Arena, Wembley

Tickets are on sale now via The Ticket Factory 0844 3380338 and the individual Arena box offices. Visit www.arenacrossuk.com for further information.

WEBB SLINGER!

CODY WEBB CLAIMS VICTORY IN TENNESSEE KNOCK OUT EVENT

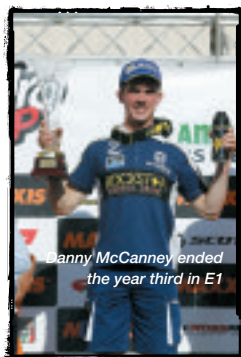
KTM's Cody Webb was the rider to beat at this year's Tennessee Knock Out convincingly claiming the title. Holding off Sherco's Wade Young, Webb won America's toughest Hard Enduro for the fourth consecutive time.

Despite some horrendous weather, Webb hardly put a foot wrong each time out on track. Making short work of the slippery rocks and boulders littering the Tennessee course, Webb topped all of his knockout heat races before dominating the main event final.

Making the trip to America worthwhile, Young put Sherco on the podium in second. Webb's closest challenger, Young was dealt a blow in the final when he had to pit to fix a broken clutch perch. Refusing to give up he fought back for second. Beta's Kyle Redmond completed the top three.



Ivan Cervantes moves to a new career in rally



Danny McCanney ended the year third in E1



Adam Sterry is CLS Kawasaki bound

'17 and focusing their support into a couple of teams only with Magee being the KTM protagonist once again.

I'll put this one out there as it has been much speculated – Trey Canard leaves HRC to join KTM as team-mate to Ryan Dungey and Ken Roczen jumps into the vacant Honda bed in the US for 2017.

Ross Rutherford again won the Scottish National championship in 2016 to mark his seventh time in doing so. 'Bunga 7-time' is the undisputed king of Scottish motocross as the statistics show and at the tender age of 31 year-old plans to continue to race for a few more seasons as he wants to win more championships and race wins than Stefan Everts and be the most decorated man at a post MXoN Monster Party.

And finally from me, that's it – I'm hanging up my boots. This season's end will put a full stop on my professional racing career as I call it a day on touring the country to race motorised horses around dirt tracks. With an arsehole full of options I don't think I'll be very far away but won't be lining up behind the gate and giving it 100 per cent every time I throw a leg over the bike.

I hope to carry on with this beautiful magazine in some capacity, too, as they have taught me more about English, grammar and terrible jokes in four-and-a-half years than 11 years of school ever did but the future is somewhat uncertain and I'm just going to do as I always do and that's wing it.

The 2016 EnduroGP World Championship is a measure of just how strong British enduro is right now. Two British world champions were crowned and seven FIM world championship medals were won.

Without getting too washy-eyed about it but that is incredibly brilliant stuff. The boys and gals can be proud of that and considering the majority is under the age of 23, well then the future certainly bodes well.

Where to start though? I guess at the top, right! Steve Holcombe, take a bow, you legend! A massive congratulations on behalf of everyone at the DBR Towers goes out to Steve Holcombe, the 2016 Enduro 3 World Champion.

From his early beginnings ragging the

bones out of his two-smoker at the British Sprint Enduro Championship it's been surreal to watch him grow into the world champion he's now become. Steve's been nothing short of excellent this season.

Jumping up to the senior ranks for 2016, and onto the Factory Beta team, it would have been easy to become overshadowed by team-mates Johnny Aubert and Alex Salvini. But Steve was never fazed by his peers and consistently beat them almost every time he took to the track.

An amazing 12 wins from 16 starts sealed the deal for Holcombe and with a day to spare he clinched the world crown in style. Adding to that he also went on to place third overall in the EnduroGP outright standings – a result that could have been more if not for two non-scores. Maybe next year!

Rookies don't come much better than Nathan Watson. What a stellar year he's had too! Bursting onto the scene in early February by winning the Italian Enduro Championship opener, he's shown he's the real deal by transferring that speed to the world circuit.

Runner-up in Enduro 1 claiming five wins along the way and closing out 2016 fifth overall in EnduroGP ensures the future's looking rosy bright indeed. And with Danny McCanney placing third in E1 it meant we also got a 2-3 result in the quarter-litre thumper class. Result.

Of course Jack Edmondson delivered the second British title this season, wrapping things up with a full round to spare in Italy back in July. With the battle for the final podium places still to be played out, Lee Sealey made it a British 1-2 edging out Valerian Debaud.

Possibly one of the most competitive championship battles to date, the Women's title eventually went to Laia Sanz, but Jane Daniels gave her one hell of a fight. Starting the year out with three wins, Jane gave it her all but came just nine points short of becoming a world champion.

Coldenhoff. That team could do some damage if Coldenhoff feels up for it on the day as he has done a couple of times this season. As things stand Holland stands a real chance of getting on the podium...





Vaughan Semmens RIP

Motocross lost one of its seventies stars in September when Vaughan Semmens succumbed suddenly after a lengthy battle with cancer aged just 65.

I'd last seen Vaughan at this year's Hawkstone International and introduced him to Shaun Simpson, who was thrilled to meet a familiar name from his dad's era.

A Birmingham boy from Great Barr, Semmens started out aged 14 as sidecar ballast with his own dad Glyn, a stalwart of the AMCA who allowed kids that age to compete. Semmens senior campaigned a Matchless outfit which he transported on a trailer behind the family Standard Vanguard.

A solo machine later joined the load and young Vaughan set out on his own eventually crossing over to the ACU. Under the influence of near neighbour Arthur Browning – a long-time factory Greeves rider – Vaughan joined Team Castrol Greeves and began to make a name for himself as a spectacular performer at national meetings in the early seventies with his dashing, robust riding style.

Moving on to race with Bultaco importer Comerfords in 1974 Vaughan became, to quote rival Roger Harvey, 'dangerously quick' and was one of a new generation of young motocrossers selected for the original 'Top 30' British Open Championship in 1975. Alongside fellow

Midlanders Harvey and Rob Hooper, plus other emerging talents like Graham Noyce and Pete Mathia, Semmens was seeded in at number 15, just ahead of future world champ Noyce.

A solid 12th in that inaugural 1975 series, Vaughan's second season was derailed by injury and he moved on, replacing Harvey and Hooper in the distinctive orange and maroon colours of Oxfordshire dealer Doug Wheeler. 15th on Doug's 400 Maico in 1977, Vaughan leapt to seventh in '78 before embarking on his finest season in 1979 when this small private team took on the 250cc GPs, Vaughan accompanied by wife Gaynor and loyal mechanic John Cox.

At the opening round, in front of 50,000 sun-kissed Spanish fans at Sabadell, outside Barcelona, Vaughan charged to a sensational fourth place in the first moto behind title contenders Jaroslav Falta, Hakan Carlqvist and Rolf Dieffenbach! Further strong rides in Italy, where he beat American superstar Jim Pomeroy in the first race, and a top six in France were followed by fourth overall in the sandy whoops of a Finnish GP at Hyvinkaa won by sandmeister Kees van der Ven. A stunning first race rostrum in the final GP where he holeshot, led early on and was beaten only by new world champion Carlqvist and runner-up Neil Hudson round the scarily fast, stony blue groove of Bielstein, in

Germany, proved Vaughan's versatility and sealed 12th place in the world, the only privateer inside the top 20.

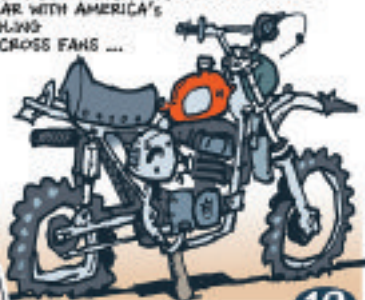
Meantime back in the UK he chased home 500 world champion elect Noyce in the British championship at Frome and ended the domestic season fourth overall behind Noyce, Hudson and Geoff Mayes. These herculean efforts were rewarded when team manager Dave Nicoll selected Semmens for his Motocross des Nations squad alongside Noyce, Hudson and Hooper. And back in the demanding Finnish sand of Ruskeasanta, outside Helsinki, Semmens somehow pushed his Maico 100 yards across the line after it ran out of fuel in the first moto, salvaging a vital 14th place to the loudest applause of the afternoon and helping the brave Brits to second place behind Belgium.

Vaughan's modest, unassuming manner belied a determination on track that was never better illustrated than that day in Finland. His top flight career would be cruelly cut short by a freak accident back at Frome that broke his femur and after retiring from racing he went on the road as a rep for Putoline Oils.

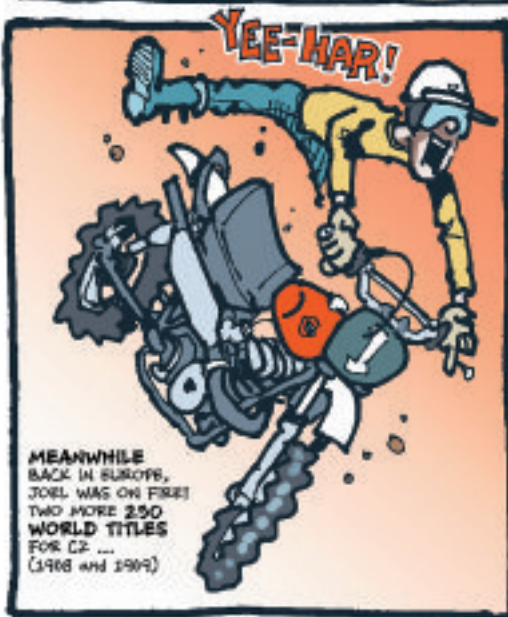
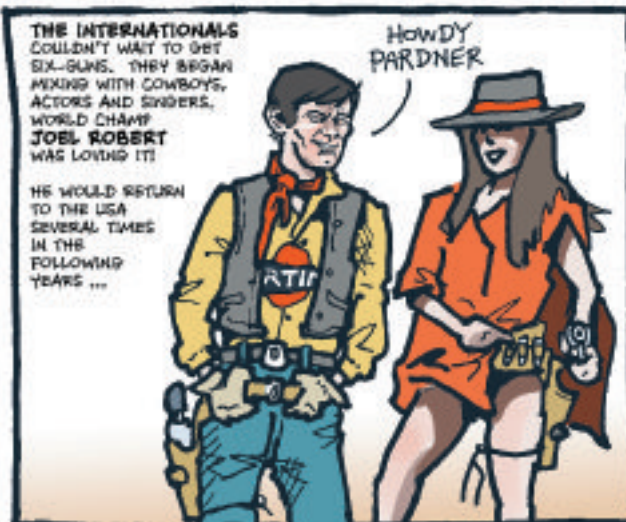
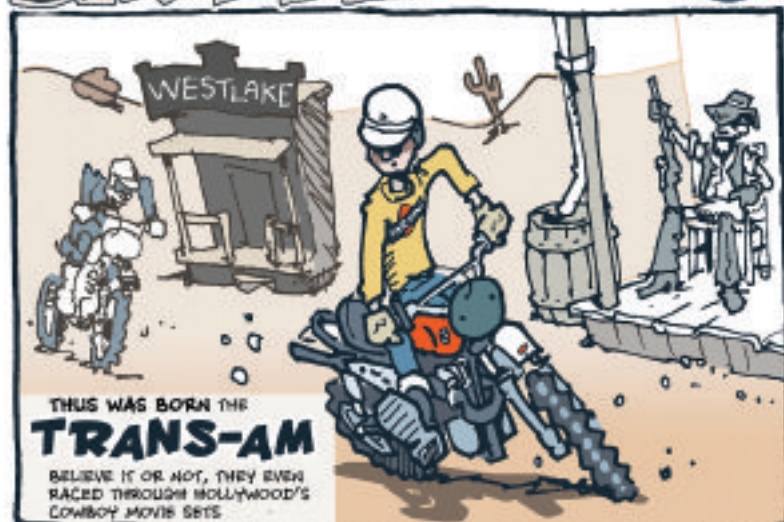
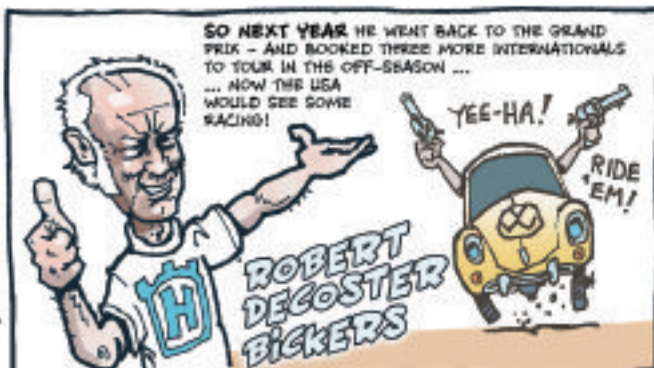
Vaughan Semmens leaves behind Gaynor, their children Craig and Rebecca, to whom our sincere condolences on their loss, and vivid racing memories for the rest of us to cherish.

Let's Get HIGH in the SADDLE

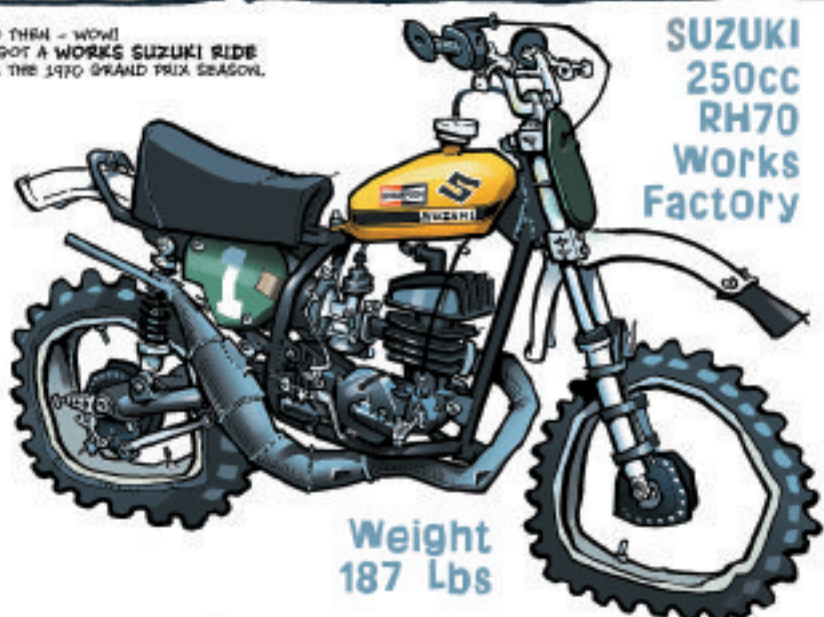
EDISON DYE'S 1966 HUSQVARNA DEMO TOUR WITH TORSTEN HALLMAN PROVED TO BE POPULAR WITH AMERICA'S FLEDGLING MOTOCROSS FANS ...



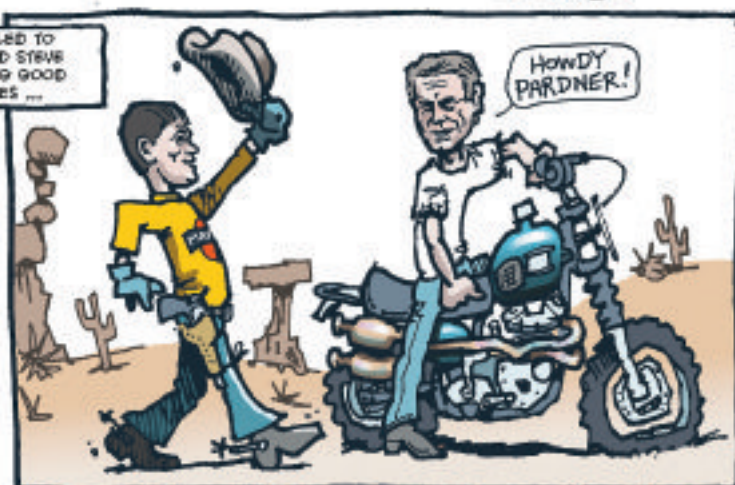
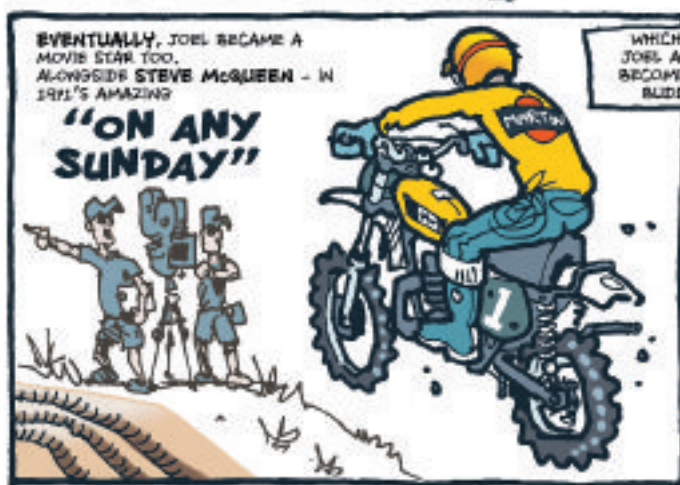
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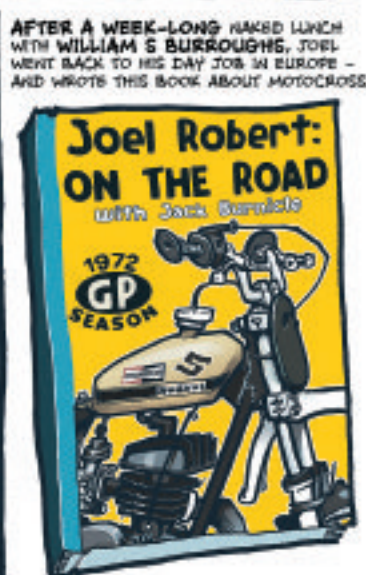
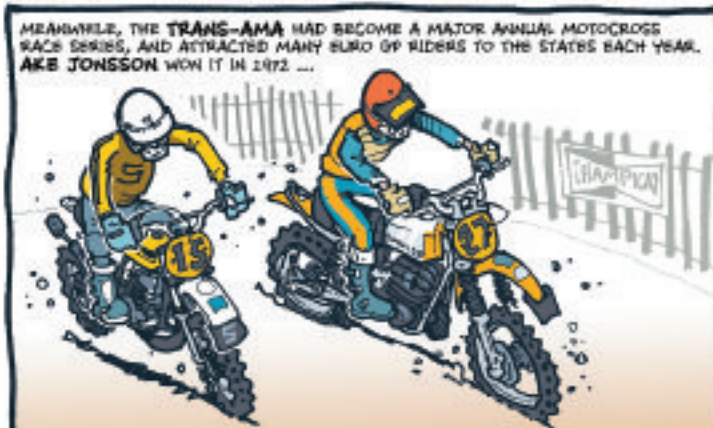
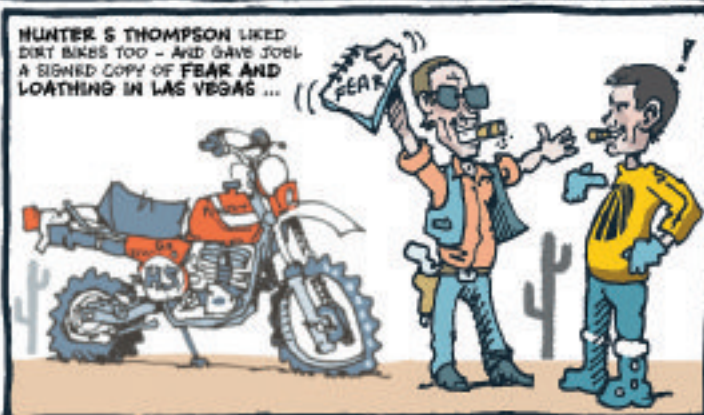
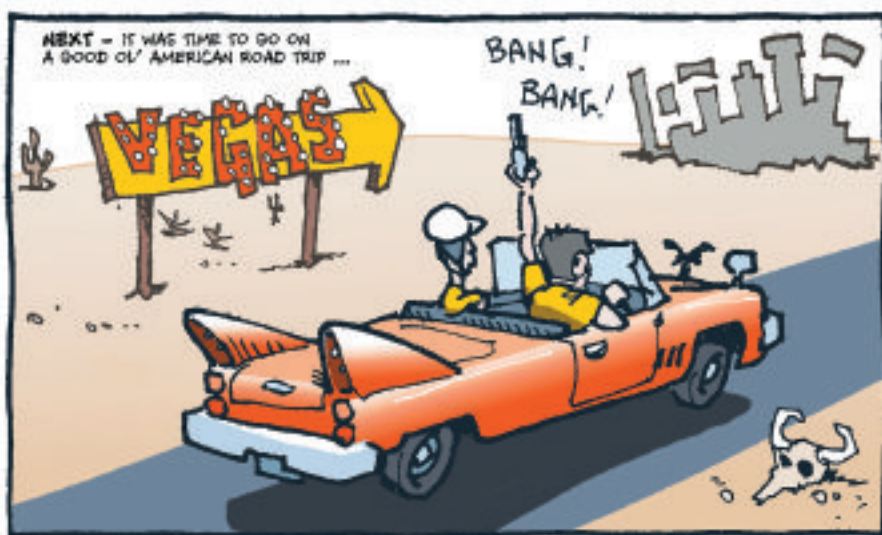


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THE INCREDIBLE HOLC

Bursting out from being an almost unknown talent to Enduro World Champion in just three short years — the Steve Holcombe story is a remarkable one by any standards . . .

Words and images **Future7Media**

DBR caught up with Britain's newest World Enduro Champion straight after his title-winning day one ride at the French GP.

Still stinking of champagne and mid-massage, we quizzed him how 2016 has panned out for Britain's first senior enduro world champion since David Knight. We asked what it's like to turn pro, get a factory ride and win a world title all in the same year as well as what's it like sharing an awning and paddock with GP legends. Finally, we quizzed Steve on how his life has changed in double quick time...

DBR: Lying here on a massage table in the back of the Beta truck – ignoring the acupuncture needles in your arm and knowing you're the 2016 Enduro World Champion – how does it feel to have 'done it'?

SH: "It feels great. Mentally and physically it was tough at times this year but it is sweet now. Well worth it. Mentally, in Portugal it was difficult. On

the first day I was leading the GP overall going into the final test and I crashed three times. That put me to third but luckily I wasn't injured and hadn't damaged the bike but it was tough.

"Everything's ended well but my worst race was probably in Greece because I was leading the overall again on the first day and I don't know what I was doing trying a different line but I ended up going end-over-end bending my bars and knocking the bike about. The second day of that GP was a nightmare really.

"The highs are easier to list from this year. Obviously nothing comes close to winning the championship but Sweden was a big high – winning my first overall GP was a good one."

DBR: Championships – so the old men tell us – are won and lost on a rider's bad days and you proved that this year...

SH: "We had a mechanical on the second day of Finland. I had a good first day but although we >>



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managed to claw some points back it was a tough time on an under-powered bike because of the problem.

"It was the same in Spain but that was probably the worst point. I was in tears because I thought that was the championship over and done. I'd had pretty much a DNF in terms of points in Finland and then to have another problem in Spain with a gearbox issue was devastating – I thought that was it. It would have been easy to give up I guess but I carried on and got some points. The next day I won the class and was fifth overall. I impressed myself with that one."

DBR: Your trajectory in Enduro GPs has been pretty damn steep hasn't it?

SH: "Yeah, I guess so. I went from the European championship in 2014 where I won the E1 Junior class and finished third overall. Then the next year we changed over to Beta UK and luckily I got a ride with Jarno (Boano Racing) the next year. Although we missed the first GP [an expensive fly-away race to Chile] we came in swinging after that and I don't think we were off the podium until Belgium when I got a banner wrapped around my wheel. I came into this paddock last year wanting to show everyone what I could do and I think I've done that – hero to zero, no wait zero to hero, sorry!"

DBR: And this year also stepping up to the Beta Factory Racing team meant you could turn pro...

SH: "Yeah, that's helped massively to have enduro as a job because you can focus on everything – on training, on physio, on

practising. It makes such a difference."

DBR: In what kinds of ways?

SH: "Well, for example, my diet has changed a lot this year compared to last and I think we're doing a lot of different things compared to other riders. Also what me and Jack [Johns – sports therapist] have worked on this year and especially during the second half of the season performance-wise with my body – warming up properly, having muscle treatments during the race weekend, it definitely gives you an edge and at this level that is what you're looking for."

DBR: So where have you noticed those differences most during a GP this year?

SH: "For me it's the warm-up most maybe because it gets your blood flowing so you feel so much more alert, it gets your lungs working too so you're not straight into the first test gasping for breath. As much as anything that helps get that feeling, when you get on your bike and you're in the right zone mentally you're ready to go and it all just leads from there."

DBR: And is your fitness different from last year or the year before?

SH: "Yes and no I guess. In 2014 obviously I was training a lot but in some of the tougher events I would get tired. But now, for example Sweden this year was probably the toughest event I've ever done but I felt really good. Obviously we're only human so I do get tired – enduro is a physical sport – but not to the same level I used to."

DBR: You spent quite a bit of time at the >>



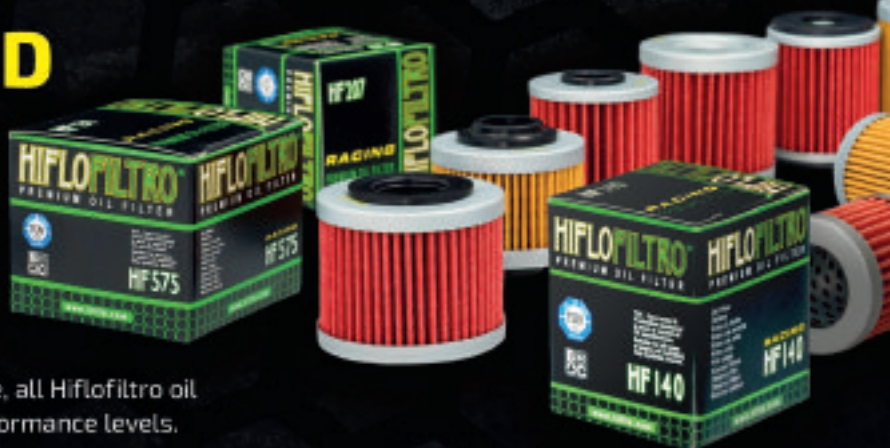
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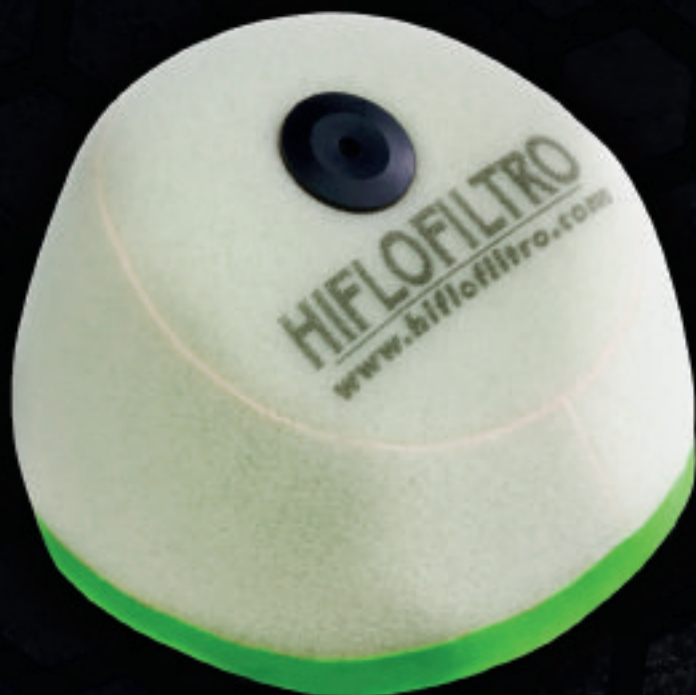


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start of the year with your Beta Racing team-mates didn't you?

SH: "Yeah, Alex Salvini invited me down in February and I basically stayed until we went to Finland in mid-June. I then stayed in Finland for a week basically riding and training. That was the mid-point of the season so I felt I really needed to get that event dialled in so basically set-up camp there for a week first to tune in to Finland."

DBR: Was it Alex's idea to train together or yours?

SH: "His really. I said last year to him that I found it really hard to train back home in the winter because UK tracks are hard to find and the weather etc and he sort of said 'next year you'll have to come down' and that is all the invite I needed really – I jumped in the van and drove down!"

DBR: What was the training like?

SH: "A mixture of riding and physical training. It was never really riding for a long time – maybe

riding for an hour and a half but really hard riding for that period of time. I remember there was one time we went riding not far from Greece and I would do a time of let's say a 1m32s, then he would go out and do a 1m31s, then I would go out and do a 1m30s – it was like that and we kept knocking down the times. It was great and I really enjoyed being at his house because he has a gym and track right there which is incredible. It would be great to go back."

DBR: You get on well with your team-mates then?

SH: "Yeah, we get on well. I spent a couple of days doing physical training with Johnny Aubert pre-season as well, staying with him and his wife. They are great people – very welcoming. It's a great team to be honest and I get on really well with everyone."

DBR: They are obviously very experienced team-mates to have and learn from...

SH: "Yeah, exactly. They are great people to have >>>

STEVE'S TOP TIPS FOR SUCCESS

#1 "Don't forget the basics. Everybody always focuses on the bike, throws loads of money at it but the most important thing is you and your body. You wouldn't put diesel in your motorbike so why put the wrong things in your tank like McDonalds or too many sweets or whatever. Proper nutrition and hydration are often

overlooked before you're riding and during your riding."

#2 "Simple things with the bike are important like sorting the suspension out properly to work for you, for your riding style for your weight and not copying what someone else has done with their bike."

#3 "Have your dream and go after it. That's all I've done!"



EnduroGP world champ Matt Philipps has great respect for Steve and vice versa

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next to you when it comes to knowing what to do, when to do it and how to do it. It's a great team."

DBR: Obviously, with Johnny and Alex being very experienced riders you've come in as the new boy and beaten them. How has that been? Has it affected relationships at all?

SH: "No, not at all. Today for example they have both been very congratulatory towards me. They have been here for many years, especially Johnny who has been in this same situation before. Obviously, with me and Johnny being in the same class it's a little bit different but we ride for the same team and we want Beta to do well so we all work together. Every dog has his day... [at this point the interview goes on hold while Mrs Aubert appears in the awning and starts tickling Steve's foot]."

DBR: How about your main rivals in the paddock, how are they towards you?

SH: "Obviously, I have a lot of respect for people like Matt Phillips as I do all my rivals. I wouldn't like to say I get on with everyone

but I tend to just have fun and do my own thing. That's my best way – if I'm happy I ride well. I try to make it stay like that, you know. These guys in my team are all very talkative and have fun a lot and obviously there are times when you concentrate. But otherwise I try to have a laugh, be relaxed and mess around."

DBR: Would you train further south in Europe again then or move to live somewhere warmer in the future?

SH: "Yeah it would obviously help. I mean these conditions [very dry and dusty at the French GP at Cahours] are my weakest so it would help to train more in them so I would like to move to Spain, or Italy or here to the South of France. But it's finding someone to move over here to train with or a girlfriend or someone like that to live with but we'll see. But yeah, spending more time in Europe is going to start being more normal next year."

DBR: You don't have a mechanic who travels with you to train then?

SH: "No but really I like to work on my bikes

myself. Obviously at the GPs it is different but when I'm practising it is just me and I love to work on my own bikes. Obviously, until this year that's what I had to do for myself anyway."

DBR: Was it always enduro then?

SH: "No, I started out in motocross and we got to the stage in MX where to go further we had to pile more and more money in to the racing to progress. At that age, 13 or 14, I was already in the position where all my friends were going out at the weekends or evenings and I was always riding. We made the decision then to race hare and hound enduro. Unfortunately, my brother had an accident racing motocross but luckily for me that meant I got his bike – without him doing that it would have been a different story."

DBR: When you go from schoolboy motocross to competing at enduro, then at a higher and higher level until this year you stop working at a Christmas tree farm – what did you do to get from that to here, a world champion?

SH: "I think, simply, this is where I want to be. I wanted to be a professional rider in the Enduro >>



Steve says his skills on dry going need the most improvement



World Championship. I was 16 when I started racing in the British Championship and I've always wanted to be here, in GPs. A lot of riders are here in this paddock for the pay cheque and you can tell that from their results. I think everybody has the desire to win but not everybody has the will to prepare to win. I didn't expect to win this year if I'm honest – the wet races this year have definitely helped. I expected to be able to win next year but it has come a year early. I've gained a year really in my career."

DBR: Was there a point in your life when you thought 'I want to be world champion'?

SH: "It's a funny thing but I've got a note I wrote when I was six year old, it says 'Stephen is a World Champion!'. It's obviously a dream when you're a kid but although you hope you will do it someday you never think you will."

DBR: Was there a point where you knew you could do it then? That you could become World Champion?

SH: "Probably the second day in Morocco this year when I won and having the results after that. Having the disappointment in Finland when I did have a really good points lead but I felt like I had used my bad day up and then to have such a poor GP in Spain I thought 'this is it now, I can't challenge for the title'. To go from there to Italy and go 1-1 again restored the faith a bit and then, well here we are in France with the title."

DBR: How did the way you approached each round change as the year progressed and you had a chance of taking a world title?

SH: "Definitely up to Italy it was 100 per cent, full-focus, go for it. After Italy it was more like 'I've got seven weeks now, I've got two events, what do I do? Do I sacrifice the British Championship in favour of the World Championship? But then if you don't ride 100 per cent you run a risk and the Isle of Man (British Enduro Championship round) was a really bad event for me – I think I caught a bug on the boat over."

"Danny McCanney was riding really well too so he won there and then the next British Championship round a couple of weeks ago I was riding on that fine line of not risking anything but trying to win. So I had a tight one on the Saturday and then had a really good day on the Sunday when I relaxed a bit. Unfortunately, I hurt my wrist there so I only really rode once before coming here to France."

DBR: How does it feel to be ranked up there with British World Enduro Champions like David Knight and Paul Edmondson?

SH: "Obviously, I'm nowhere near the level of those guys were – not yet. Even the guys running now to be honest, names like Phillips or Bellino. I don't really feel part of it. I am part of it but I don't feel part of it if you know what I mean? I don't get stage fright when I talk to them or anything but, you know, I don't see myself as that type of person yet. Maybe one day with a few more titles to my name..."





Steve finally clinched the title on Day One of the Fench GP



PARENT POWER!

Say hello to Chris and Tania Holcombe — proud parents of a new British World Champion . . .

DBR: Where did it all begin for your boy, who's now become World Enduro Champion?

CH: "He was early teens when we started to do 'Wirral Off Road' stuff, they were the only ones who would let riders that young have a go so we started to travel up from Devon for three-day weekends up there and it started from there. That's where he decided that's what he wanted to do, as opposed to motocross. That's where he got a feel for it and started to learn the ropes as it were."

DBR: Did you push him to always take the next step all the time?

CH: "No, no we've never really been like that."

TH: "We had a camper and we loaded the bikes up and went wherever the racing was really."

CH: "To be fair to him once he realised he could do well he just wanted to do more — we just went with what he wanted to do."

DBR: How have you seen him grow up and change from boy to man in the last two or three years?

TH: "Well the biggest change has been this year really. He gave up his job, he gave up his girlfriend because he wanted to do this and not that and he's dedicated himself more."

CH: "In the last two year he's started to take it more seriously. It's not like he didn't take it seriously before that but, it's not like results came easy before that but it seemed to come to him if you know what I mean — he didn't have to train, he could eat and drink what he wanted. But in the last two years he really got his head down, he realised that he wanted and what he needed to do to get it. And he damn well went and got it didn't he?"

Good Charlotte?

WE CHECK IN AT THE MXGP OF THE AMERICAS TO SEE IF THE EXPERIMENT OF BRINGING THE MOTOCROSS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TO A NEW AUDIENCE AT A DIRT OVAL PAID OFF OR NOT...

Photos by Ray Archer and Frank Hoppen

More used to hosting World of Outlaws Sprint Cars, Super Late models and Big Block Modifieds racing wing-to-wing around its half mile oval, The Dirt Track at Charlotte Motor Speedway was given a massive makeover for the penultimate round of the FIM Motocross World Championship.

In the run up to the event British track builder Justin Barclay sculpted an epic motocross circuit both in and outside the confines of the clay circle then sat back waiting for the MXGP elite – and one or two local wildcards – to come and test his creation. However, just one day before the action was due to begin Hurricane Hermine – surely that should have been Hurricane Hannah? – blew through the facility and left it stood in a few inches of the wet stuff. Was the GP of Americas dead in the water?

By culling the Saturday practice and qualifying schedule, and working tirelessly to prep the track, Justin – and the event promoters – somehow sh*t a miracle and not only managed to work the track into totally perfect shape but also squeeze all the necessary action into one day.

For something built from scratch on a fairly flat piece of land the track was actually pretty well received by the riders with Eli Tomac describing it as a “mixture between motocross and the Monster Energy Cup”. It also came across pretty well on TV and compulsive viewing for us Euro fans who couldn’t finance the trip overseas.

The history books will show that Eli Tomac and Cooper Webb took the overalls but that doesn’t tell the full story. While Tomac was pretty much head and shoulders faster than everyone else in MXGP it should be remembered that all the Euro guys had raced one of the most brutal rounds of the championship before boarding a plane to the US. And for Tim Gajser in MXGP and Jeffrey

Herlings in MX2 there was a much bigger picture to think of.

Herlings secured his third world title with an impressive come from behind victory in race one that saw him pass early leader Austin Forkner and Webb in one swoop. But the Yanks fired back in race two while the freshly crowned champion followed them home for third. Only Jeffrey knows how much effort he put into winning that second race or how much energy he burned up during the celebrations at the end of race one.

Tim Gajser similarly sealed the deal in the opening MXGP encounter with a fourth place finish as Tony Cairoli – ill since the Dutch GP – came home an unlucky 13th. With that monkey off his back the Slovenian posed much more of a threat to Tomac in race two and ran a close second but there’d be no stopping Eli.

“It was an awesome day,” enthused the Monster Energy Kawasaki star. “Conditions weren’t easy in either race – we had the sun in our eyes in the first race and it was tough to see the ruts under the floodlights in race two.”

Of course that was the same for everyone – and with the Saturday qualifiers culled nobody had rode the track under lights ahead of the second moto – although the majority of locals with their supercross experience would of course have had way more practise riding under lights. “We aren’t so used to racing in the dark,” admitted Romain Febvre. “It was a little dark in some of the corners but it’s the same for everybody.”

So all in all it seems that the experiment to run a US GP in such an alien setting paid off and while the oddities of the race – as well as the tiring effect of travelling to America for the European racers – make it difficult to answer the question of which series is the stronger it still served as a fairly awesome event. Let’s hope it’s not just a one off!



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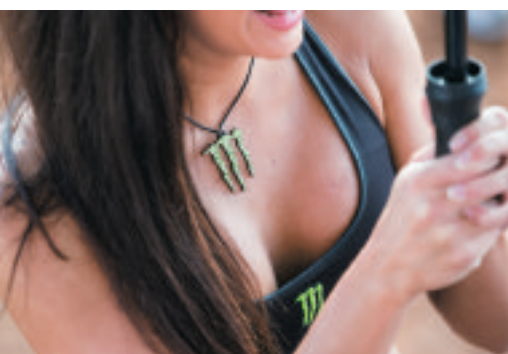
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Eli Tomac

Eli Tomac aced the MXGP test a grade above the rest and won both motos in Charlotte – and then two more in Glen Helen – on the Monster Energy Kawasaki. “I did what I needed to in both motos,” confided Eli in North Carolina. “It was a different challenge to be racing the guys I normally only see once a year at the Nations.”



Cooper Webb

With a 2-1 scorecard Cooper Webb was the overall winner in MX2 and a happy one at that! “After the first race I was a little bit disappointed – I didn’t ride as I should have ridden. Obviously I felt I rode okay but Jeffrey capitalized on a couple of things,” said Webb later. “I knew what I needed to work on and I knew I needed a start but that didn’t happen and I almost went down in the start.”

“I knew it was going to be a tough race and I was actually just hoping to get on the podium after being nearly last. The track was a little hard to pass but once I caught them I knew passing them would be hard. I was able to do that and I was pretty stoked on that and I was right on Austin and was able to pass him. In the end it was a really badass race and I think that was the best I have ever ridden. To end my 250 career with that result and in front of my home crowd was really awesome.”





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Max Anstie

Rockstar Husqvarna's Max Anstie struggled to eighth overall in Charlotte after an early crash in race one and subsequent charge through the park left him drained for race two. "I got a great start in the opening race following Forkner in second," said Anstie. "But a couple of turns later I lost the front and went over the bars. I got back up and rode really strong to get back to sixth. My start in moto two wasn't that good and as I was battling through the pack I felt intense stomach pain. I guess I got physically drained from trying too hard in moto one."



Justin Barcia

It all started so well for BamBam with a strong second place finish in moto one but a jammed wrist caused by over-jumping a double saw him back in the pits before race two had even really got going.





Antonio Cairoli

After a strong performance in Holland where he went 4-1 and just missed taking the overall a subdued Tony Cairoli rocked up to Charlotte complaining of a sore throat and feeling fatigued. Medication didn't really help the situation and so Cairoli soldiered on to a 13-14 scorecard to consolidate his second place in the series standings.



Darian Sanayei

Steve Dixon's new signing for 2017 made his MX2 GP debut in Charlotte and acquitted himself well against his new classmates – even leading race two for the briefest of moments. "In the first moto I was eight or ninth in the first corner and came back to sixth until two laps to go when Anstie passed me," explains the 20-year-old American. "Seventh is a pretty good result for my first ever MX2 GP moto but after this race and riding so much I was already feeling some pain in my back. I got a nice holeshot in the second moto which was good and from there I just tried to survive – I didn't feel so good and I got a 13th so overall it was not so bad for my first GP."



Adam Cianciarulo

AC's MX2 GP experience lasted as far as turn two in Charlotte before he crashed heavily and hurt his shoulder. Fortunately there's no major damage and the Pro Circuit Monster Energy Kawasaki rider can walk away safe in the knowledge that he led every moment of the only GP he's ever competed in. Can anyone else say that?

Austin Forkner

While the GP was a bit of a disaster for his older PC team-mate it was nothing but a positive experience for Austin Forkner who lead both motos (23 laps of the 38 completed) and ended up third overall courtesy of a 3-2 scorecard. "I even surprised myself today," said Austin. "I really didn't know what to expect and even the start was different as we had to prepare our own gate. I set fastest time in practice and took the lead on the opening lap in each moto. That mistake in race one cost me the win and I just handed it to them but they were inching me in during race two. We Americans go for it from the beginning of the motos while the GP riders are stronger at the end. I was getting pretty tired at the end, but it was pretty special today."



Tim Gajser

Needing to score 10 points more than Tony Cairoli to clinch the world title in race one, many pit pundits expected Tim Gajser to become the first rider to win back-to-back world championships while moving up a class since Greg Albertyn managed it in 1993 at the end of Charlotte's second moto. However, an ill TC more or less rolled over and gifted Gajser the title which took Tim, Team Honda and pretty much everyone else by surprise. But that surprise was nothing compared to what Tim had waiting for us when he explained how he sees his race bike during the press conference... "It feels amazing. It's unbelievable to have won this title – I still cannot really take it all in," said Tim as you'd expect before dropping the bombshell. "I must thank Honda and the team so much for everything they've done and given me this year. The bike has really been fantastic. It becomes so much a part of you that you really have to click with it and have a good relationship with it. We call our bikes our babies – they're like second girlfriends! And this year the Honda CRF has just been perfect. I couldn't ask for better or for more." Okay then...



Jeffrey Herlings

Jeffrey Herlings was delighted to finally clinch his third world title in Charlotte after missing out due to injury for the past two seasons. "I am really super, super happy," he said. "Especially after everything we've been going through with a broken femur, a dislocated hip, two broken collarbones and almost losing my little finger. It's title number three and hopefully there are many more to come."






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THE FIGHTER!

IN MARCH 2015 MEL POCOCK SUSTAINED AN INJURY THAT WOULD HAVE ENDED MANY RIDERS' CAREERS BUT LESS THAN 18 MONTHS LATER HE'S A CONTENDER AGAIN...

Words by **Sean Lawless** Photos by **Nuno Laranjeira**

Less than 18 months ago, in the space of just a few corners, Mel Pocock went from British championship contender and world championship front runner to a rider whose future hung in the balance.

Fast forward to today and he's once again a British championship contender. Okay, maybe not for the 2016 crown but the goal for next year is to finally win the MX2 title and put the seal on a remarkable comeback from the horrific hand injury that almost ended his career.

"I see myself as a contender for next year's British championship," he tells me at the close of play at round seven of the Maxxis series at Preston Docks. "Every time I race I strive to win. This year I had to look at it differently which isn't something I like to do because I always want to go thinking I can win."

"There are a lot of good riders now, the younger

riders are definitely going good and there are other riders putting more effort in and upping their skills so it's not an easy task."

There were a lot of good riders in the field in 2015 when the 24-year-old from Sussex went into the opening round of the Maxxis as a strong pre-season favourite. Vice-champ from 2014, seven days earlier he'd recorded a joint career-best sixth overall at the Thai GP with 8-7 moto finishes on a DRT Monster Energy Kawasaki.

"I switched to Steve Dixon's team to concentrate on the world championship. I put so much time and effort into the winter because it was my last year when I was 23 to race MX2. I geed everyone up for it, I put all the extra time in and at the second round in Thailand I matched my best result with sixth overall. I was pumped with that sort of result so early in the season when so many riders were still healthy."

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"Then I came to the first round of the British championship and had that big accident and nearly lost my right hand and things changed from there."

Just two corners into the opening moto he was caught up in a crash and his right hand went into another rider's rear sprocket. His injuries were catastrophic.

"It was the toughest time any rider could go through. You can break your arm, break your leg – those things heal – but I lost three-quarters of my thumb, I lost the joint, I completely smashed my hand to bits. Not only that, I severed two main arteries and tore my thumb muscle completely out. It was a life-changing scenario.

"From that day I've had seven operations on my hand, I've got a new thumb muscle that's come from my leg. It was a serious, serious thing and it's a big risk on my behalf to be back racing again."

In total Mel's been on the operating table for 35 hours – 20 of those were in the week after his crash – and he lost 10kg in the first fortnight.

"It's affected me massively. My grip a lot, the fact that I've been out of the scene for so long and been sat at home while the others have been still racing and doing their training. I got back riding reasonable okay – six or seven months after the injury – but then there was another operation needed to take out some metalwork so the injury held me up for probably 14 or 15 months really. It was a big, big blow. I'm still on the catch-up, even to this day."

Mel, the youngest ever Red Bull Pro Nationals Rookie champ, has had his sights set on a Maxxis title for almost as long as he can remember. From the way he talks about it I suspect it means more to him than the European 250cc crown he won comfortably in 2012 beating, among others, Jeremy Seewer and Tim Gajser.

The same year he won his Euro title he came within five points of the Maxxis MX2 championship – only losing out to Elliott Banks-Browne at the final round – and was second again in 2014 behind Matiss Karro.

"I was maybe 17 when I won my first round >>>

Despite only moving to Hitachi Husqvarna halfway through the season Mel looks right at home on the rapid white bikes





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of the Maxxis which I'm still trying to win now. I've been runner-up twice. In 2012 me and Elliott had a fair run right up to the finish line. That was one of my best years of racing and we fought for that toe-for-toe.

"The next year I concentrated on GPs which is my biggest regret. I wish I'd carried on doing the British championship.

"In 2014 I raced Matiss Karro for the win and unfortunately at every track we went to he just seemed to be a couple of bike lengths quicker than me and I was never able to bridge that gap unless he had a crash. It was very frustrating for me because I was always searching for that last little bit.

"It was still a very good year with Hitachi REVO KTM – they backed me the whole year, we made our bikes faster and I put more and

more time into it but unfortunately there was just that gap every single weekend that I couldn't close 80 per cent of the time."

Mel started his comeback season with DRT Kawasaki although there was no contract and when the Hitachi REVO team – by now using Husqvarnas – needed a fill-in rider for the injured James Dunn he got the call.

"I love working with Mark and Sam [Yates]. Their passion for the game is second-to-none in the paddock and they work so hard on the bikes to develop engines and improve stuff. Those two are a credit to the pits and I'm very happy to be back with them again this year.

"It's definitely brought me on with the support off and on the racetrack and the midweek thing is a big part of the sport now. There was a time when you could just get on the bike and go

race it but our race bikes are now so advanced compared to the normal bike they take a lot of time and effort to get used to."

Before Mel could get his comeback under way he suffered another setback during pre-season preparations in the USA as a direct result of his hand injury.

"Not many people knew about this but I was training in America at the beginning of this year and I was struggling with grip and slipped off and dislocated my right shoulder. That was purely down to my hand injury – it created another crash and another injury because as I went down I tucked away from my hand and fell on my shoulder awkwardly. That wasn't pleasant and it held me back for another eight weeks.

"Now my shoulder feels 100 per cent and

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my hand is surprisingly up to the job. I was running with a modified grip – we had a tapered one made – and now I'm running with a standard grip so that's a massive positive for me. When I get on the bike I look down at the handlebars and it's all the same so once the gloves are on you can't tell."

Whether it's a result of the switch to Hitachi REVO Husqvarna, the extra saddle time or – most likely – a combination of both, since he made the move he's re-established himself as a potential winner and picked up third-placed moto finishes at the last two Maxxis rounds.

Inevitably, however, his injury means he's not the same rider he was before the accident.

"In a racing scenario I will back off if I'm in a position where I feel my hand is vulnerable. It's changed the way I come down hills because I've got a lot less grip and leverage because of my thumb. I literally use my stump to clamp the handlebars. It's made things a lot more interesting – it's a lively old situation when the bike starts going a bit squirrely and I do well to hang onto it sometimes.

"In a different way it's made me stronger. I had a decision to make whether I stopped racing or came back and it was a tough decision because of the extent of the damage to my hand. I'm taking a big risk to carry on racing but it's not just bikes, it's everyday life. Doors slam and stuff like that and if my hand was to get smashed again it's already had a big blow. Saying that, I'm still not scared of a big crash!"

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There are plenty of rumours circulating regarding where Mel will be racing next year and a news release confirming his plans is imminent but for now he refuses to comment. What is for sure is he'll be going for that elusive MX2 title.

"I'm a veteran of this class. I've been on a 250 for almost 10 years now so in a normal world I'm a young man but in the motocross world it's a 'is he still doing the MX2' kinda thing. I had big plans to go to MX1 prior to hurting my hand. It was going to be my last year in MX2 but as soon as I hurt my hand it changed everything.

"I was a European champion in 2012 which I'm proud of and that took a big bit of time and effort to achieve and be so consistent in that class. But I'd love to be British champion before I stop racing – it's a big goal of mine that I've narrowly failed to achieve."

Now he's aged out of the MX2 class in the world championship any GP ambitions he still harbours will have to be put on hold but he doesn't rule out one day lining up among the MXGP elite.

"I'd never say never but I'm still learning to ride with my hand. It does fatigue easily so

I need to be super careful with where I put my body position. For instance, today I overcompensated with my left hand and got arm-pump in my left arm because I was struggling with my right.

"People watching may think 'he's back racing, that's cool' but it's an ongoing thing for me – it's changed motocross for me."



Teamwork

MEL'S TOP TECH

The relationship between a rider and his technician is an important one and Mel's return to the Hitachi REVO team means he's been reunited with Sam Yates, son of REVO boss Mark.

"It's really good to be working with Mel again," says Sam. "We got on really well in 2014 and it's cool to be part of his comeback from the terrible hand injury he suffered. We work closely together in the week testing in Belgium and the UK as well and it's a lot of fun – it's been more pleasurable than stressful.

"Mel's very easy to work with. He knows exactly what he wants out of the bike and what he wants by way of support and as a team we're here for him. It's great.

"He's really determined and a fighter. To come back to this level after last year shows his character and our goal, which we feel is realistic, is to win the British championship next year in MX2.

"That's always been his goal and I think that's what's made him pull through his injury – I think for him to even get back on a bike again is quite incredible."



Mel and his old man Mel share a joke with the REVO boys...



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IVAN CERVANTES

***"THIS IS NOT THE END. MY CAREER IS NOT OVER.
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FOCUS HAS SHIFTED - MY FUTURE IS RALLY..."***

Words and photos by **Future7Media**





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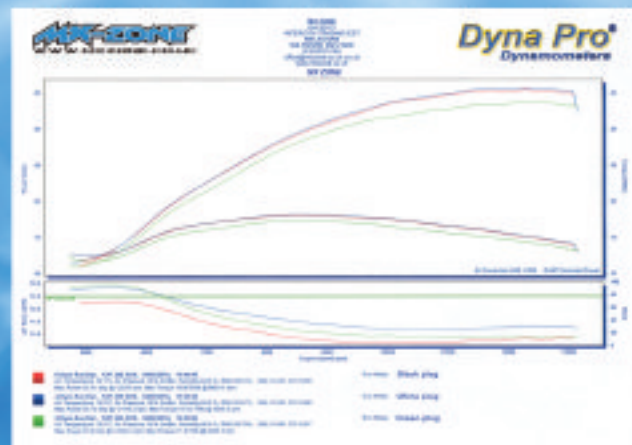
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When it comes to enduro Ivan Cervantes has seen and done it all and with nothing left to prove is widening his reach to the temptation of rally – a sport which has also recently caught the attention of former rivals Antoine Meo and Pela Renet. It's a decision he's happy to make.

With five world championships to his name, the first and only Spaniard to win the ISDE outright, a SuperEnduro champion – and not forgetting a top 10 Erzberg result too – Cervantes has enjoyed a glittering and successful racing career. A rider who came from nothing, with no hype or expectations, built a career that will stand the test of time and one that will be recalled alongside riders like David Knight, Juha Salminen, Antoine Meo and Mika Ahola as one of the greats of our time.

Further proving the diversity of Cervantes' ability on an enduro bike it's in some way fitting that our opportunity to sit down with him comes at the foothills of the Arco di Trentino mountains overlooking the picturesque Italian MXGP circuit and for this weekend The Wall Extreme Enduro Classic. It's the eve of the race – he'd

later go on to finish second to extreme enduro expert Alfredo Gomez – and a gentle air of calm ensues as we shoot the breeze over an espresso shot or two.

Relaxed, open and full of charm, Ivan remains the cool easy going character he's always been. Success hasn't changed him. In a way it's matured him even further and while his time at the top of traditional timecard EnduroGP racing is coming to an end, he's more than aware it's been a good run but one that's taken the work ethic of a world champion to stay there.

"Staying at the top for so long is hard for any athlete. It all goes down to hard work, dedication and your ability to turn weaknesses into strong points. From 2003 until my injury last year, the only time I finished outside the championship's top three was in 2012."

That's a heck of a run, one that requires the ability to roll and adapt to the changes of what is currently an evolving sport. With no background in trials, extreme tests and technical riding needed work.

"I remember when I first saw an extreme test – I couldn't believe we had to ride over

logs and stones. Any man-made obstacle would make me so stressed that I'd struggle sleeping sometimes. It was a similar story with racing enduro in the mud.

"I was lucky to have my father by my side. He always remained calm and told me anything is possible when you work hard. After my first GPs I got back home to see he had transformed my supercross track into a proper extreme test. He'd filled it with logs, tyres and stones, so I knew I had to get down to business."

And it's been that mentality combined with a close working bond with his father that's helped Cervantes make history. With the fruits of their labour paying off, he first rode into the record books in 2005 as the first Spanish Enduro World Champion – a title, which to this day matters a lot.

"My first title means everything to me, really. I won the title during the GP of Greece, on October 8, 2005. I remember closing my eyes at the finish and seeing all the good and bad moments of my life leading to it.

"It wasn't just that I was the first Spanish rider to win a world title, it was seeing all the >>



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effort myself and my father had put in over the years being rewarded. All the sacrifices and the hard work had earned us a place among the world's best. The following day I remember getting a message from a friend. He congratulated me for the championship but said that if the first title was hard, then staying at the top would be even harder. He was right."

Like most, Cervantes started out riding for fun. He was four, his first bike a 50cc mini bike and it was a combined family hobby with his father and brother. Natural progression led to the race track and it wasn't until 1991 when he raced locally that his talent inevitably drove him further and higher.

"It wasn't until 1991 when we decided to start racing the Catalanian motocross championship. From there I went to the Spanish championship, then the European series and I even got to compete in some motocross World Championship events."

But reaching a ceiling of sorts in motocross, he was faced with two options. Hang up his professional racing boots or widen his reach. Young and admittedly narrow minded, Ivan recalls enduro as not really being his

first choice.

Like so many the sexier world of motocross was where he wanted to make his name, not hidden away in the depths of a muddy forest. Enduro was worlds away from the bar-to-bar combat of MXGP, grid girls and 40 minute motos. Eight-hour days in the saddle and then spanning your own bike at the end of it all wasn't so attractive. But with success coming almost instantly the dream of earning a living, and a good one at that, was much more promising. It was time to widen his reach, time to learn how to change his own tyres.

"When I was racing motocross I wouldn't even consider the possibility of racing enduro. But in 2002 I had a big shoulder injury that made me reconsider my options. Also in motocross I could be fast in qualifying and always got my best times in the first couple of laps. My father had a Honda XR400R so I started riding enduro on it. With the help of KTM Spain I began racing the Spanish Enduro Championship, winning races almost straight away."

The rise to the highest level in the sport was a quick one and one if not by chance.

Filling in for the injured Kari Tiainen, Cervantes accidentally caught his big break at just the right time.

"It was a weekend I'll never forget. Kari Tiainen was racing for KTM's factory team in 2002 but he got injured and I was asked to replace him for a couple of rounds. My very first World Enduro Championship event was the GP of Finland in 2002.

"Day one was a disaster. I was pushing hard but ended up crashing five to 10 times in every special test. That night Kari asked me what was wrong. I was winning races in the Spanish championship, so he couldn't believe I was that bad at the WEC. He told me to forget about the pressure and just ride for my own pleasure. Next day I was second in E3 and fourth overall."

Still learning the ropes, Cervantes ended a full campaign in the then 500cc category as runner-up in 2003 and placed third overall in Enduro 3 in 2004. Big bikes clearly suited the Spaniard but it wasn't until 2005 when he dropped from the largest capacity class to the smallest that sparked off three of his greatest years in the sport.

Switching to Enduro 1 for 2005, he clinched >>



IVAN'S GREATEST...

Moment

"In 2009 I became the only rider in the sport with World Championship titles from Enduro and SuperEnduro. I'm also the only Spanish rider with an overall ISDE victory. But the most important day in my career was October 8, 2005 – the day I got my first Enduro World Championship title."

Opponent

"In my first full year at the WEC in 2003 I beat Juha Salminen for second in E3. But probably my biggest battle was with the great Mika Ahola in 2008, when we were both fighting for the Enduro 1 title."

Bike

"The KTM 350F that I raced in 2013 was probably the best bike I've ever ridden. I think it perfectly combined power and handling, making it really easy to go fast in all kinds of conditions. I loved that bike."





the title while making history as the first Spaniard ever to do so and then successfully defended it. But with unfinished business in Enduro 3 he jumped back on the big thumper in 2007 and duly won that crown too. Showing great versatility in the ability to adapt to different engine sizes, Cervantes showed himself as a well-rounded rider though he still remembers the work involved to do so to perform at your best.

"I always loved big bikes. I signed my first contract in 2003 and raced a KTM 500cc thumper in Enduro 3 class. It was a good season, I got my first race wins and finished second in the E3 championship. I stayed in E3 for one more year and in 2005 I raced KTM's then new 250F in Enduro 1.

"The switch to the smaller bike wasn't easy. Along with changing my riding style I also lost 8kg to be competitive on the 250F machine. But when you're working for a big factory sometimes it's the marketing guys and your bosses who take the final decisions for you as to what bike you'll ride."

Claiming his fourth world crown in 2009, his second in E3, Ivan chased the complete set by going after the Enduro 2 title in 2010 only to fall short to Mika Ahola. Having so far spent his entire racing career with KTM, Ivan looked for change.

With offers a plenty he hoped a move to Gas Gas – a Spanish rider on Spanish machinery – would become a match made in heaven. But unfortunately it was a marriage that delivered little, ultimately ending in divorce after two seasons. If he could do it all again he wouldn't but then again hindsight is a wonderful thing.

"If I had the opportunity to go back in time, I wouldn't have signed that Gas Gas contract. It might have been a mistake but I don't hold any huge regrets now. Life is for learning and you learn the most from your bad decisions and mistakes.

"The truth is that I did feel comfortable within the KTM team but I thought that maybe it was time to make some changes. Gas Gas is a Spanish brand, the factory was two hours away from my house and there were lots of promises from their side. Promises that never came true. It definitely wasn't for the money.

"Part of our agreement was that I could start building my own racing team. And I'd be able to create my own riding school with Gas Gas' support. The problems started three to four months after I signed my contract. That's when I realised what a big mistake I'd made leaving KTM. The special parts for my racing bikes never arrived and then Gas Gas started having problems not being able to take money out of their bank accounts."

When KTM's Enduro Factory Racing team manager Fabio Farioli told him he was welcome to return to the team, Ivan didn't have to think about it twice. "KTM is my family and I'll never regret coming back to the team in 2013."

With a successful debut ride of 16th overall in the 2016 Dakar Rally already in the books, Ivan is currently in transition. The 2016 EnduroGP series will be his last as a full time gig with only one-off rides pencilled in for 2017. Instead he's swapping timecards for road books and eight-hour rides to 8,000 mile ones.

"The Dakar Rally is without doubt the biggest challenge of my career. It is the hardest adventure in terms of strength and durability both physically and mentally. I know I've over 10 years of experience competing at the highest level in enduro but I also know there's a lot to learn in rally. Navigation is so important. You've got to be fast, but you've got to be smart too."

Without doubt it's one of the biggest challenges of his career he'll face. Whether we'll one day see the unmistakable smile of the Spaniard ride onto the Dakar podium remains to be seen but like he's always approached his racing, venturing into the unknown can be rewarding and highly successful.

BURNICLE'S BEAT

The Magic



of Maggiora

What made the 1986 des Nats so special?

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

What exactly was it that made Maggiora 1986 so special that it etched the 40th Motocross des Nations so deeply into the heart, soul and annals of the greatest off-road sport on earth? After all, we've had many stupendous Motocross des Nations contests both before and since that memorable day.

Glorious weather, a majestic setting and a vast, vibrant audience have graced many such occasions and obviously contributed to the enormity of the occasion. And what better venue than the 'Mottacio del Balmone', where AS Maggiora first introduced motocross in 1964 and subsequently hosted MX and Trophee des Nations contests in 1970 and 1980. But perhaps principally it brought together for the only time outdoors in Europe the three standout American icons of a generation, at the pinnacle of their powers, in a show of strength, skill and purpose that future misfortune would prevent them ever exhibiting together again.

Other great riders, teams, talented also-rans and absolute nuggets contributed to an astonishing weekend which, though we were blissfully unaware at the time, marked the first world championship promotion by a bearded young Italian entrepreneur who has since gone on to dominate, meddle with and change forever the nature of the grand prix game. >>

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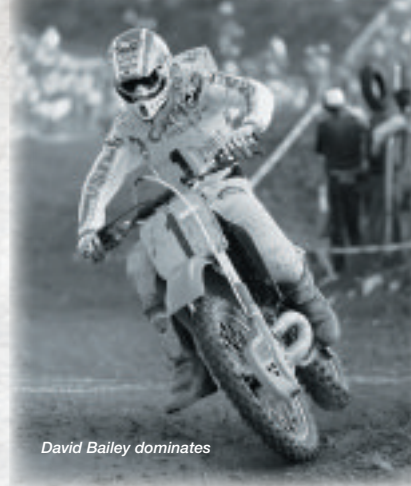
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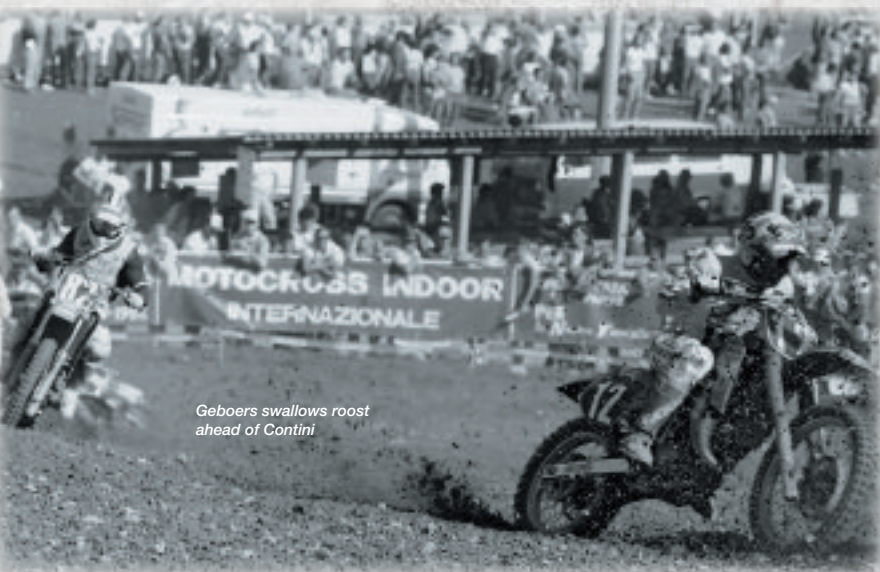
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O'Mara, Johnson and Bailey at the team presentation



David Bailey dominates



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Johnson and O'Mara run away with first moto

The USA reverted to their original winning formula of selecting the Honda America line-up. This stellar cast encompassed the top three in the 1986 AMA supercross series. 22 year-old Ricky 'Too Hip' Johnson, from El Cajon, Southern California topped the supercross table and also won the 250 outdoor nationals. Mentored by multiple AMA champion Broc Glover at Yamaha, 'RJ' clinched his first 250 outdoor title in 1984 after an acrimonious season-long set-to with Honda's Ron Lechien. He also took the YZ490 to a resounding second place in the US 500GP at Carlsbad that year behind Glover and was part of the US MX des Nations team victorious in Finland and at the last ever Trophee des in Sweden. Rick lost out in the tightest supercross season ever in 1985 before being hired by Honda and winning not only those 1986 SX and MX crowns but also the US 500GP at Carlsbad.

At Honda America Johnson joined established style councillors Johnny O'Mara and David Bailey. 'The O'Show', 24 years old, hailed from Simi Valley in southern California. Introspective and reserved, he didn't fit the usual American sporting mould. At 18 O'Mara debuted in the AMA 125 Nationals on a white Mugen Honda wearing white riding gear and in his rookie season famously won a wet 1980 US125GP at Lexington, Ohio, beating world champ Harry Everts.

Honda liked what they saw and signed O'Mara for the 125 nationals in 1981. He finished twice second to Suzuki's Mark Barnett, won the 1982 Swiss 125GP on a flying visit and featured in the original victorious US Trophee and MX des Nations Honda squads – the latter his first race on a 500! O'Mara finally toppled Barnett to win the 1983 125 nationals before beating Bailey and Johnson to the 1984 US supercross title. He also won the 1985 US 250

grand prix at Unadilla. But top three in the 1986 250 MX and supercross championships wasn't enough to preserve his place at Honda America for 1987, so O'Mara arrived at Maggiora with a bitter point to prove!

Team-mate Bailey, although born in San Diego, SoCal was brought up out East by adoptive parents – his dad early US motocross star Gary 'The Professor' Bailey. David rode Bultacos like his father and never thought he'd be any good. But he enjoyed watching Europeans led by Roger De Coster in the Trans-Am winter series, learned fast and turned professional in 1979 on a private Kawasaki. His smooth, polished style impressed newly appointed Honda America boss De Coster who signed him up alongside O'Mara.

1982 ruined by a broken leg, Bailey recovered to represent the States as a late substitute in the second all-Honda domination of the Trophee and MX des Nations. Then in 1983 he beat illustrious team-mate Bob Hannah to win the 250 national title, triumphed in the US 250GP and speared Mark Barnett to clinch a massive supercross series by two points! Another MX and Trophee double followed, as did a further MX des Nations victory in Finland, a pair of 500cc National championships in 1984 and '86 and the 1985 US500GP at Carlsbad. Disarming, witty, self-effacing and fast, 24 year-old Bailey formed the final prong in America's awesome squad, riding a CR500...

What of the opposition? Well, it was the usual European story, with several top teams losing leading riders and lacking any apparent motivation. Belgium, minus Andre Malherbe, still looked strong but 1985 runners-up Holland lacked Kees van der Ven and newly crowned 125 world champ Dave Stribos. Home team Maddii, Rinaldi and Contini would surely be inspired to perform but perhaps the best bet to

thwart the States was Great Britain fielding 500 world champion Dave Thorpe, Jem Whatley – guaranteed a great welcome aboard his factory Cagiva – and spectacular 17 year-old Rob Herring on a 125 Kawasaki.

Ireland, represented by Stephen Russell (500 Yamaha), William Burgess (250 Honda) and Alan Morrison (125 Kawasaki) and managed by two-metre man Geordie McCann, somehow shoehorned themselves into William's van for the long journey south. With 24 teams entered the Irish boys would line up on the two-tier grid alongside America's Top Guns as well as basket cases like Greece, Portugal and Hong Kong – though the latter did mysteriously feature David McKirdy on a 125 Yamaha!

The first modern era MX des 12 months earlier featured 20 countries running 125, 250 and 500s simultaneously in 60 rider races. But with a field of 72 at Maggiora the FIM jury astutely decided on two races for each rider – 125 versus 250 in race one, 125 and 500 in the second and the big guns, 250 versus 500 in the third. So each moto started with 24 riders on the front row, their team-mates lined up astern, gates drawn by lot and best four results from six to count. The Americans drew the dream inside slot again – as they had in 1985! – and craftily lined up O'Mara's 125 in front of Johnson's 250. Sharp starting Johnny O simply moved right into the 180 degree first turn, allowing 'RJ' to spring up the inside and hijack the holeshot.

Michele Rinaldi (250 Suzuki) had the crowd howling as he briefly held second place until O'Mara breezed past. Rock solid Rinaldi remained third though ahead of John van den Berk and Pekka Vehkonen (250 Yamahas), Whatley and Swedish hustler Peter Hansson (250 Husqvarna). With three laps to go Whatley and Hansson passed Finland's Vehkonen but >>

SHOCKTECH

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SERVICE
SET-UP



STAGE 2

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second-placed 125, worth a precious two points, was loudly acclaimed Italian GP winner Massimo Contini (Cagiva), gating 21st then gobbling up 10 places to reach 11th. So Italy lay a strong second ahead of Sweden, Finland and the Netherlands with Britain a distant 10th after Herring had been flattened by a wayward Yamaha. Belgium were even worse off, dead last, both Jo Martens (250 Husqvarna) and ex-world champ Eric Geboers (125 Honda) sidelined with broken chains!

Last man lapped, Burgess finished 22nd with Morrison 27th and 13th 125. Alan actually lined up ahead of Russell's 500 for race two but Bailey pulled rank on O'Mara, commandeered the front row and burst to the front leaving Johnny's 125 languishing in 11th place. Thorpe fought hard to pass another world champion, Georges Jobe (500 Kawasaki). Georges followed David past impressive 500cc rookie Gert-Jan van Doorn, Venko Honda's 250GP bronze medallist, then promptly fell. This freed up the track for a charging O'Mara, who had already surged past seven open class aces in as many laps. For four further fiery circuits, the whole valley in uproar, O'Mara wore down a despairing Thorpe, his Honda hampered by a burned out rear brake. On lap 11 the Californian hurtled down the second steep descent, hammered through the rutted right-hander at the bottom, drove out underneath the world champion's 500 and whipped his 125 over the huge left-handed hilltop to a deafening roar from the packed amphitheatre. Europe's humiliation was complete and Johnny O'Mara immortalised as a motocross deity.

This also meant the USA's unblemished 1-1-1 scoreline already assured them of victory as a vital battle for 125 points raged downfield. Finland's Mika Kouki (Yamaha) eventually edged out a skinny French kid called Jean-Michel Bayle, on a Kawasaki, and Geboers in a blanket finish, with Contini fifth and Herring sixth. This moved Great Britain into the top six. Italy still lay second but Corrado Maddii (500 Kawasaki) and Rinaldi gated badly in race three as Thorpe bravely holedshot then locked horns with Bailey and Johnson.

The battle raged for five laps until Johnson squeezed past the Englishman and took off after Bailey. Van Doorn, running a fine fourth, slid off at half-distance and dropped to ninth, ending Holland's chances of another rostrum finish as the 250s of Aussie Craig Dack (did he ever ride this fast again?) and Whatley swept past. Rinaldi, 24th on lap one, rocketed through the field, the crowd in a frenzy and snatched sixth place on the penultimate lap from Finn Kurt Ljungqvist's 500 Yamaha to rescue Italian pride and a podium, a lovely outcome for team manager Emilio Osterero, who rode at that first Maggiora meeting in April 1964!

David Bailey meantime slowed to stage a dead heat, Ricky Johnson clasping 'The Little Professors' right wrist aloft as they crossed the line. Thorpe and Whatley, second and third in their respective classes, heroically hoisted the UK up to second as Sweden, Finland, Holland, Belgium and France all fell apart with rider retirements. Burgess and Russell reprised Ireland's first race results to maintain the Emerald Isle's 100 per cent finishing record while Hong Kong's Cheng Tai Kim, on a 500

Yamaha, was lapped eight times!

So the jubilant American trio had written a very special chapter in motocross history, though they lost a bunfight uncharacteristically launched by Thorpey at that evening's presentation ceremony when O'Mara waved the white serviette of surrender. And they never again represented their country together. Four months later David Bailey – only three weeks past his 25th birthday – would be paralysed from the waist down during practice for a Golden State round at Lake Huron, California. O'Mara, newly signed by Suzuki, never truly recovered from his close friend's misfortune while Johnson, having risen to global stardom, was struck down just shy of turning 25 when, after dominating the early rounds of the 1989 AMA supercross championship, he was wiped out and suffered a career-ending wrist injury.

What of the young Italian entrepreneur who presumptuously joined them onstage that Sunday evening? Best quote the press release bequeathed us that weekend. 'In 1983 Giuseppe Luongo Organization organized his first international motocross race. From that moment with a belief of Italian Federation Giuseppe Luongo and this young organization has taken the way of succes (sic), coming in a short time to take care about imagine and sponsorship of the most important motocross events in Italy. All this for wonderful Maggiora spectacul (sic) profit.' Oh yes!

30 years on Luongo had reduced motocross grands prix to second rate supercross in Charlotte Motor Speedway, North Carolina. Perhaps he peaked at Maggiora in 1986!



Rinaldi and adoring Luongo on stage on Sunday evening



Thorpe holedshots the third moto



Best Irishman William Burgess (250 Honda)



Bailey and Johnson stage a race three dead heat



First turn fracas delays van den Berk (58) and Carlqvist (72)

YELLOW FEVER!

**DAN DARES TO GO RACING AND AS A RESULT LEARNS
PLENTY MORE ABOUT THE RM-Z 250...**

Words by **Dan Grove** Photos by **Ady Cowshall** and **Martin Pickard/MPS Images**

Last month I mentioned that I was going to get back racing and also that racing is the only way to really test a product – or products.

So I signed up for a round of the South West Premier series and then went out and promptly gave my Pro Carbon Racing sump guard a decent test by landing off of a jump directly on to a trackside post.

Yup, I tried avoiding a rough landing from a small tabletop a little too much and hit the take off a little too fast and luckily the front wheel and fork legs missed it however I heard and felt the bike land on the guard and it slowed me and the bike down and made the landing feel weird as you can imagine.

I was certainly lucky to ride it out as on the left was a pretty steep drop down a hill and it could have got ugly really quickly if the post caught the bike somewhere other than the sump guard. If the sump guard wasn't on the bike I've no doubt the post would have got caught up on one of the lower frame rails and section between the footpegs and I spent a couple of laps thinking about that one while trying to get the heart rate down!

After the race I checked it out and sure enough there was a white line from the painted post but after cleaning that off there wasn't any damage to the guard except for a minor scratch! A great quality product from Pro Carbon Racing for sure and it's not something you think about with sump guards, I just assumed they were to protect from stones and roost but they also allow you to glide over track posts if you ever feel like trying it... I don't recommend it though.

As for the bike, the only thing that I had to do all day was refuel, lube the chain and go through the normal pre-race checks. Nothing comes loose on the Suzuki but a five-minute check over before each race doesn't hurt does it? So I raced the bike with the same settings mentioned last month and at Whiteway Barton where I raced it got really hardpack, choppy, and slick which was a great test for me and the bike. The RM-Z outperformed me for sure but I was certainly happy with the day and I was looking forward to racing more in the coming weeks.

One area that I thought did need improving on the bike was the front brake. The JT Racing disc and Renthal brake pad combo worked really well but at Whiteway Barton there are a lot of tight corners that were harder to stop for compared to other dudes that I was racing so

I upgraded the front rotor again with an oversize floating disc from Apico Factory Racing.

The standard disc is 250mm and the Apico disc is 270mm. The disc itself looks the business and the black anodized inner disc carrier and caliper bracket (which is included in the kit) really makes the whole kit stand out. Installation was pretty straight forward and I just had to remove one of the pins that the caliper slides on from the standard bracket – which still had plenty of grease on that I applied earlier in the year – then add this to the new bracket and it all went together easily.

It's not too difficult if you're thinking about getting an oversize disc kit – just invest in some decent Allen keys for the disc removal and installation of the new one. I put the standard pads back in as they barely had any use and my first ride out with the new brake was at Doncaster Moto Parc.

It was a great day and the track was awesome – the complete opposite to Whiteway Barton – as the ground is quite soft there with some deep sand sections thrown in. Think Millville but without the hills. I realised that day that I hadn't rode a track with soft ground and no dust for almost three months so I think that played a part in why I enjoyed the day so much.

As with my race the previous weekend, I didn't change any settings on the bike and it felt awesome on this track as well so it kind of shows how versatile the RM-Z is – I just swapped the rear tyre from a Metzeler MC5 that I'd been using in the drier weather to their MC4 which is great in soft conditions.

Other than that it was just the addition of the new brake disc which did take some adjusting to as it was much stronger and each session out I felt more comfortable with it. The feel is much different to the stock sized brake. With this track and the way the lines form there aren't many heavy braking areas as there aren't many tight corners but where >>



there was the braking bumps got quite choppy meaning that the front wheel wasn't in contact with the ground through the whole braking area. In these areas I noticed that when the front clipped some bumps I could feel how strong the brake was as it really slowed the bike down quickly which as I said, took some adjusting to.

First impressions were all positive and since then I've been racing a fair bit. I raced at Farleigh Castle which has every type of corner you can think of and this is where the front disc came into it's own at the end of the longest straights found on the track. I was out-braking people in these areas every lap and I was almost surprised about how late I could brake!

I'm not sure if it was because of the stronger brake or the rough track – it was bloody rough – but I bottomed the forks out once when the front wheel bounced into the face of another big braking bump although it only happened the once. It was a pretty hot weekend and I noticed that after one race the fork pressure had increased by two PSI however on the track I didn't notice the difference but this is something that I would recommend checking on hot days next summer as you may want to start off with a lower pressure so that the optimum pressure is reached during the race or ride. Something to think about anyway...

My next race out was the All British at Maisemore and again I had another mega weekend! I returned to my favourite Metzeler MC5 rear tyre but apart from that I didn't change or adjust anything which is what we all want from a bike isn't it? I checked the fork pressure after each ride and there was no change in the pressure so I put this down to being a much cooler weekend temperature wise.

The track was the complete opposite to Farleigh with a lot of tight corners and slow sections however the RM-Z performed just as well – to be fair it's never not performed well. Suzukis are well known for being great handling bikes and after a few weekends racing I felt like I was actually racing the bike and pushing it harder in and out of the corners as well as the jumps – it keeps responding

exactly as it should.

It's been a fun few weeks for me and the RM-Z and I'm going to find as many races to enter as possible before it goes back to Suzuki HQ...

Next month the RM-Z will be equipped with a new set of Renthal sprockets and a chain as the JT combo that I have on the bike at the moment is finally showing signs of wear after five months of use! Impressive stuff, like, really impressive!



DBR TESTED POLISPORT FOLDABLE LIFT BIKE STAND

I think we've all been in that awkward situation where the van is rammed to its absolute capacity. You've got your bike, your mate's bike and your mate's, mate's bike in there. You've also got your riding gear, their riding gear and bountiful amounts of fuel as well as all the other paraphernalia that you may or may not need for a day at the track. All this stuff is squeezed into the back of your van that isn't quite big enough. It's almost a ritual that the last item you try to ram in (if you even remember it that is) is your trusty bike stand. But low and behold you only find out there is no damn room left!

Well our friends at Apico now have a solution to this very problem, with the new Polisport foldable lift bike stand. I for one love a lifting bike stand as there is truly nothing worse than coming in from a moto hanging out your arse and then having to pick your bike up and chuck it on a stand – give me a foot pedal and a 'lifter' any day of the week please! The great thing with the Polisport stand is that it's the first hybrid bike stand-made from plastic with a reinforced metal frame – so its extremely light weight and totally foldable so you can squeeze it into a very small space. This means that you'll surely find room for it somewhere next to your mate's, mate's bike!

It can lift 200KG which is more than enough for a muddy four-fiddy. It's got a built in handle to ensure that it's easy to carry around, a rubber non slip composite on top to stop your bike slipping and sliding off, a locking mechanism so the stand won't drop accidentally and some pockets to put your nuts and bolts in when working on your bike. All in all I'm really impressed with this product and for me it's a no brainer, every MXer should have one!

Price: £75
Supplier: apico.co.uk
Contact: 01282 473190

**DBR
TESTED**



DBR TESTED BREEZE 4K - FLYING ACTION CAM

When someone asked me the other day if I had ever seen a flying action camera I just laughed at them. They then proceeded to whip out a brand new to the market gadget called the 'Breeze'. Apparently this little thing has only just been released and is getting a lot of attention. Basically it's a mini drone with a camera built in. However it's USP is that it can pretty much fly itself while you simply take a photo or video with just the touch of one button on the app on your phone.

For any camera/video buffs out there the Breeze boasts a 13 megapixel camera, which is pretty respectable but also a 4k video camera (or digitally stabilised 1080/30FPS or 720/60FPS) which is very impressive! This thing is tiny too measuring in at only 240mm in diameter.

The Breeze comes with its own little 'lunch box' to store it in so it can be chucked in a backpack or gear bag and be taken pretty much anywhere. It also has GPS and IPS (indoor positioning sensors) meaning that it can be flown outdoors and indoors easily and safely.

The guys at Yuneec reckon that they've created a brand new genre of 'flying action cameras' here with the Breeze – not only can the Breeze be flown like a normal drone but it also has 'intelligent' flight modes such as 'follow me', 'journey mode', 'orbit me' and 'selfie mode'. This means that the Breeze will fly itself while you can concentrate on framing the perfect photo or video shot.

My first impression is that it's pretty damn rad. It's not quite fast enough to keep up with a full-sized MX bike but anyone who is looking for the ultimate selfie and rad photos and videos from above this gadget is a must.

Price: £439.00
Supplier: yuneec.uk
Contact: 0208 449 4321



DBR TESTED O'NEAL FIDLOCK HELMET

There's a cool new way of strapping your helmet on coming out later this year from O'Neal. After trialling the innovative FidLock system on their range of mountain bike helmets for the last couple of years the first pre-production helmets including this buckle are making their way around some test riders across Europe.

Being DBR we got our hands on one to have a good look at. Our test helmet was the '3 Series' helmet from O'Neal which will be produced with the FidLock buckle initially – hitting shops in October – and then it may be rolled out across other helmets in their line up.

Using two magnets and a metal clasp to connect and lock in place, the FidLock buckle ensures a secure fastening and an audible click can be heard once it's connected correctly and locked together. It's not just a case of the magnets holding the buckle together, the combination of the clasp and magnet keeps it soundly fastened so no matter how much you twist or bend it while on or off your head the buckle just doesn't come undone.

Undoing the buckle simply takes a pull of the red tag which disconnects each half of the buckle by separating the magnets and disconnecting the clasp. It's that simple.

Not only will the 3 series helmet from O'Neal feature the FidLock buckle it also boasts a fully removable and washable liner, multiple air vents, modern styling with plenty of designs to suit all tastes and price tag of around £120. Those features are perfectly suited to riders new to motocross – as you should always buy new helmets – or those that like the latest gadgets and cool equipment. And who doesn't?

Price: £124.99
Supplier: o'neal.eu
Contact: 0117 980 7500



**IF YOU ENJOY A
BRUTAL POUNDING
JUST AS MUCH AS
MAX SEEMS TO
THEN YOU SHOULD
HEAD OVER TO
DUNSTABLE TO
TAKE ON 210 MX...**



In our mission to find new, cool and interesting tracks to ride and rate we hear all sorts of stories about what track is best and which tracks are toughest. Recently we heard about a track that is claimed to be the roughest and toughest in the country – rougher than FatCat during the last session of the day? Tougher than F-15 Mepal in the depths of winter? Doubtful...

But we headed to 210 MX Motoparc in Bedfordshire with an open mind to see if the rumours could be true. Open on Saturdays and Sundays from April through to September, 210 MX is a track almost unlike any other I have ever come across – it almost feels like a secret location.

There has been a motocross track at this site

for 25 years but for the majority of those years the track was in the hands of the farmer, the ground was hard packed and the facility wasn't all too organised. Five years ago the track came under new management – the same guys that once operated EssexMX – and the circuit has undergone a huge facelift.

Long gone are the hardpack days of old. The soil is now a peculiar mix of loamy dirt and very fine wood chippings (almost sawdust) still with a hard base in places. This concoction of different dirt and characteristics comes together to form one of the bumpiest tracks I've ever ridden and I visited 210 on a rather quiet private hire day and spun my laps early on while the track was still relatively 'smooth'!

If you're a glass half full kind of rider you'll take one look at this track and be delighted as you're about to put in some good, hard laps that'll really test your stamina, technique, ability and concentration. If you can put down a solid 25 minute moto around 210 then I've no doubt that you'll be able to stomp it around any track, anywhere in the world!

But if you're not one of those guys you may just wince at the prospect of putting your body through a moto of pain and anguish. There really is no rest at 210, you have to be alert at all times, you have to be on your toes and your concentration levels must always be at the maximum. It is easy to be misled at 210. Yes that berm looks nice and soft and loamy but



ESSENTIAL INFO!

210 MX MOTOPARK

Location: Leighton Buzzard, LU7 9JH

Length: Just under a mile

Prices: Saturday £20 Sunday £30

Contact: 07870132061

Surface: Loam/woodchip

Shop: No

Catering: Yes

Kids Track: No

Coaching: No

Toilets/wash block: Yes

Opening times: Saturday 10am – 12:30am
and 2:30pm – 5pm
Sunday 10:00am – 2:00pm

Difficulty: High

Enjoyment Factor: Fun but tiring

Suitability: Challenges the best of the best

Session length: Open sessions

Groups: Open sessions

underneath there may just be a hard slick patch just ready and waiting to catch you out.

In regards to the layout the track is fairly simple. There's only really one big tabletop jump that some may find a little scary but there are a few obscure doubles/triples that the faster guys will find and may wish to leap. Although quite a short track in theory – coming in a just under a mile long – that's more than enough if you ask me.

In terms of difficulty and suitability I'd definitely say that 210 can challenge the best riders around. That being said don't let the gnarliness of this track put you off. Graded after every riding day and during the midday break on Saturdays if you arrive early enough you'll enjoy a nice flat circuit for a certain period of time and I have no doubt that even the novice and beginners amongst us will enjoy that experience!

Talking about that midday break, on Saturdays the riding day at 210 is split into two sessions – morning (10-12:30) and afternoon (2:30-5). On Sundays the track is open from 10 am until 2 in the afternoon.

Currently the track only operates during

the summer months (April to September) due to previous planning conflicts. However those conflicts have now been resolved and after a winter of preparing the track and the infrastructure 210 will be operational all year round for 2017 and beyond. This is great news because this track can most definitely handle whatever Mother Nature wants to throw at her.

In regards to facilities and services 210 has the basics covered – catering, toilets, marshals and first aiders are all available to keep you safe, fed, watered and emptied.

If you're looking for a tough day at the track and wanting to reap the rewards come race time then 210 is the place to be. A badger's bunghole has nothing on 210 MX...

CONCLUSION

Difficulty – Herlings' heaven!

Fun factor – rough fun – if you're into that. . .

Facilities – the basics are covered

Overall DBR score – 210 might just be the roughest joint in the country!

BACK TO THE FUTURE!

WE'VE HIT THE MAGIC 88MPH. THE FLUX CAPACITOR IS OPERATING AT FULL STEAM AND THE SPACE/TIME CONTINUUM HAS BEEN LEFT IN TATTERS AS WE HURTLE TOWARDS THE FUTURE. OUR BTTF PROJECT IS WELL ON THE WAY TO COMPLETION AND I CAN'T EVEN BEGIN TO DESCRIBE HOW FRICKIN' EXCITED I AM ABOUT THROWING MY LEG OVER THE FINISHED MACHINE. THE FUTURE CAN'T COME QUICK ENOUGH...

Words and photos by Max Hind





You'll have seen in a previous episode of BTTF that the motor has had a complete overhaul and will now give Doc Brown's flux capacitor a run for its money in terms of performance. We've also improved the cooling systems, stripped every single nut and bolt off the bike and given everything a damn good clean. So what's next you ask?

Well we all know that one of the most important aspects of a dirt bike is how well it hooks up and how good the ol' sussy works when we're shredding laps. So understandably I was pretty stoked when I got a call from DBR Towers telling me to get the shock and forks up to the good guys at Shocktech in Rotherham for a much needed overhaul.

Shocktech was born way back in 2003 and is owned by Ryan Mason. His crew includes his brother Sean and Maxxis MX2 supreme Jake Millward. Shocktech offer a full range of services from re-valving and complete upgrade packages to just the standard suspension service – they can do pretty much anything to suit your requirements. All the pricing can be found on their comprehensive website www.shocktech.co.uk. Once they know the weight of the rider (with gear on of course) and the standard of pilot riding the bike they can hook you up with the right settings, oil level and re-valve (if needed) for your riding style and level of experience.

With the exception of replacing a couple of sets of fork seals the suspension on the YZ hasn't been touched in the six years I've had the bike. To be honest the set-up on the YZ 125 is as good as I have ever ridden out of the box and truthfully I'm not good enough (or rich enough) to appreciate factory exotica. That being said, both ends of my bike were well overdue a service and as we are trying to create the ultimate 125 dirt scooter we just had to get that sorted.

Ryan always uses the best quality parts and best quality oil. It was quite obvious while watching the guys do their thing that their attention to detail is second to none and that they pride themselves on the quality of work that they turn out. They have a fast turnaround too. If they receive suspension on a Monday/ Tuesday they will endeavour to get it done and out the door by the end of the week so that you're ready for your motos at the weekend. The guys also have a fully kitted out van for trackside assistance. They offer a track side service to get your clickers set up for you at the circuit for a bargain of £15.

So as well as a service, fresh oil, new seals and dust cap the guys found the bushes were worn in the forks on my bike so they replaced those too. And now we are ready to tackle every bump that comes our way!

With the forks and shock back in the bike we thought it would be down right criminal to put the tired old original set of wheels back in. So when Roland at Hardcore wheeled out a magnificent set of chrome/blue Haans (another brand that he imports to the UK) I couldn't resist whipping the cheque book out. Not only do they look great but they are a super strong set of wheels that will truly stand the test of time. As it happens our friends at Apico had already sent me a rear sprocket and axle blocks in the same blue so the set up looks frickin' naughty to say the least!

While I'm talking about the guys at Apico I also have to thank them for a few other items in this month's episode. They've helped us move a few steps closer to finishing the project. First up is a set of chrome/red Pro Taper Windham bend contour bars. Not only are these super strong but they look the business to and fit in perfectly with the red/blue colour scheme we are shooting for on the bike. Don't panic if you don't like red though – Apico have a massive range Pro Taper bars available with varied bends in almost all the colours of the rainbow.

Apico also sent me a set of Pro Taper Pillow

Top Lite Tri-Density grips which are incredibly comfortable to ride with. To finish off the bar set-up they also sent an alloy throttle sleeve with its own bearing for super smooth throttle control and with all the extra power we've found I'm certainly going to need that! Yamaha UK had already sent a genuine throttle cable replacement for the bike so now that it's all fitted it feels awesome.

As well as all the bar stuff Apico also sent out some Xtreme foot pegs which are anodised blue and wider than the stock parts. As well as that we've got a pretty trick Apico rear brake pedal that not only looks great but has some practical function too. It has a tether built-in to make sure it doesn't get ripped off your bike if you have an unfortunate moment when racing.

As I've said previously Apico have really helped us out with parts and bits for the Back to the Future project, so if you're like me and love a bit of bling make sure you check out their range – it's pretty damn extensive!

Last but by no means least for this month our BTTF article wouldn't be the same without a visit to Doc Brown's workshop. Roland Shaw from Hardcore Racing has put countless hours into this project and as well as sorting the Haan wheels this month has also hooked us up with a full HGS exhaust system. Not only does this look as trick as hell but it really does increase performance throughout the rev range. This is a really important addition to the bike as we have already improved induction with the V Force reeds and the tuning of the engine means we need an improved exhaust set up to maximise performance.

Finally for this month's episode Roland whipped out his vapour blaster again which is not a euphemism. After stripping the frame of every single component he gave it a deep clean along with the swing arm and triple clamps and boy do they look good!

That's it for now but if all goes to plan next month you'll finally see the finished article in all its glory and I for one can't wait!



Project



IT'S BEEN A TOUGH MONTH FOR DBR PROJECT PILOT JOE CADWALLADER WHO'S STRUGGLED TO TRANSLATE HIS PRACTICE PACE INTO CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Nuno Laranjeira

It's not been the best of months for DBR Project pilot Joe Cadwallader who's made impressive progress on the practice track but has so far struggled to translate this improved speed into results.

First up for the 17-year-old RMJ Academy FC 250 Husqvarna UK rider this month was the Maxxis MX2 round at Preston Docks where, despite posting a season-best ninth in qualification, things didn't go to plan once the points-payers kicked off.

"I got 12th in the first race after starting in 17th which was okay," he says, "but I had a crash in the second and hurt my leg and could only get back to 16th at the end. I think I was 15th overall which is a bit disappointing after running top-10 at Leuchars. Then I went to the MX Nationals at Hawkstone and got another ninth in qualifying and ended the weekend with 11th overall.

"My results haven't been that great to be honest. I haven't been feeling that comfortable for some reason and I had bad starts at Hawkstone which didn't help."

Mindset is almost as important as physical fitness when it comes to racing and Joe knows there's room for improvement with his mental preparation.

"At the moment there's a problem with how I'm handling pressure. All last week when we've been practising I've been faster than Henry Williams but when I get into a race something happens and I can't run his pace.

"I've been given a book to read called 'How Bad Do You Want It?' by Matt Fitzgerald which is all about sports psychology. Hopefully this will help me up my game on the racetrack."

With the final Maxxis MX2 race at Foxhill just days away Joe's concentrating on preparing for the flat-out-fast Swindon circuit.

"I've been working on my speed again – sprint laps and staying off the brakes through corners – and the bike's working good. We had a chat about suspension with Matty from Evo-Tech at Preston and haven't really altered it since apart from setting it up for Foxhill this weekend. I'm used to it now and feel at home.

"I did an ACU team event at Foxhill when I was on an 85. It's jumpy which I like and I'm looking forward to getting back on hardpack – there hasn't been a lot of that this year so it should be good. I'm more of a hardpack rider so hopefully I can end the series with a good result."

Academy boss Richard-Mike Jones wants to see Joe show his full potential in a race situation.

"When he first came to me he hit some personal bests but the last month as far as racing is concerned has been tough for him although he's made some big improvements on the practice track," he says. "He just hasn't taken them to races so he's got one more race this weekend to show everyone what he can do.

"The last six weeks he's come on massively – a big step forward – and should

now have gone from running outside the top 15 to comfortably inside the top five at national level. It would be brilliant if he could do that to show people the improvements he's made."

Rich-Mike has no doubts about Joe's talent and feels building his mental strength and confidence is the key to bringing all the pieces of the puzzle together.

"Joe really doesn't believe in himself as much as he should do – like I said, on a practice track he's a different rider to the one you see at the races and I see him not fighting people. It's as if he respects the 'name' riders in front of him too much. From my point of view that's frustrating because I'm on the sidelines wondering why he's not making passes I know he's capable of. He needs to realise that he's good enough so it's important to build his confidence up.

"At Preston he put in his best qualifying performance and in the first race he was behind people he once would have struggled to keep up with but he wasn't challenging them and I know for a fact he should have gone past them and left them. There was a group of four riders who would normally beat him and they were holding him up. It was as if he was just happy to be staying with them.

"I understand this and to a degree it's a step forward but it's not what he's capable of and not what we're working towards."

DBR will be following Joe and the RMJ Academy Husqvarna every month so stay tuned for further updates...



“We’ve been through different sizes, frames and foam, sweat absorption, ventilation systems – there has been evolution but not anything really big.” A 10-time world champion and holder of the record number of Grand Prix wins might know a thing or two about a piece of kit that must rank as one of the most important in a motocrosser’s arsenal of protection but perhaps doesn’t get much attention – until it is too late.

“If something is working properly then you never think about it,” reckons British Champion Shaun Simpson. “When it goes wrong then you start the questions – why is the sweat dropping in? Why is there dust inside?”

As Stefan Everts hinted, the rudimentary riding goggle has not seen a radical overhaul

through the decades but there is little doubt that specialists like Scott, Smith (until leaving motocross several years ago), Oakley, 100%, Pro Grip and so on have refined some critical elements of eyewear. So much so that when Oakley launched their Airbrake in 2013 with a Plutonite lens it came with a lofty promise of durability and a price level to match. Comfort and fit, vision, strength and protection have been the main parameters in the development of goggles and long since the days they were made of leather or integrated into a mask.

MXGP, AMA motocross/supercross are not only ultimate test beds for bikes and technology but there are plenty of prototype and secret materials being worn by riders that encounter the extreme conditions of riding and racing.

The two vital motos at the weekend just scratch the surface. The miles of training and testing mean that items like new stretch fabrics, boot construction and goggle material also get a thorough grilling. What do the riders themselves think about the passage of time and the changes of their working ‘wares’?

“You just grow up with the equipment...so you don’t tend to notice it too much but then someone will come with a big step forward like 100% with their Forecast roll-offs and then the other companies catch up,” says Monster Energy DRT Kawasaki’s Tommy Searle. “I think the goggles continue to get a little bit better, a bit stronger, a bit better technically. Sometimes it is just a simple thing like one year you’ll have some dirt fall down into the goggle whereas

GOGGLES FORWARD VISION!

TAKING MX GOGGLE DEVELOPMENT INTO THE FUTURE...

Words by **Adam Wheeler** Photos by **Ray Archer**

next year there is less or no chance of that happening."

"They started to become like mobile phones and became more and more sleek," reckons Simpson. "Look at Scott – the goggles went as small and compact as can be with nice lines and form. Now – just like phones – they have started to get bigger and bigger again – Oakley brought out the Airbrake with the roll-offs and big canister and Scott have gone for massive vision and widening the peripheral with their new Prospect. I think that has been the biggest thing in the last few years...together with the environmental issues around tear-offs which means in a couple of years we'll be using roll-offs all the time. Pro Grip went to a large roll-off, Oakley had 5mm more and now Scott gone even larger than that for the ultimate view. I don't think you can get any bigger and there is no space [in the helmet] to do that."

Suzuki's Ben Townley – the first ever MX2 world champion in 2004 – is a little more sceptical on the rate of progress. "Maybe the shape of the lens, and Oakley claim that the way you look through the lens with the prism effect and the light is different – although

at speed with mud, dirt and sweat flying everywhere I don't think you can see huge gains in the last 16 years although these days you can put the goggle on and feel there has been sort of evolution.

"I have been an Oakley guy for a long time and the 'O' frame is still a very good goggle and that's what I wore in 2001 and I would have no issue right now having an 'O' frame roll-off."

"It seems that every five years there is a significant change with goggles so I'd say I've seen two big major developments," Searle continues. "When I first started it was always Smith and I was with them with for a long time and then Scott and now 100% and I'm impressed with them because they are a new company but have come in with such a strong product."

"I think the biggest thing has been the introduction of laminates and I think it was around the time of my first GP seasons that they came in and I believe Oakley were some of the first and I heard someone say once that Oakley's supplier is one of the only ones for laminates in the world," says Simpson. "The demand was so high that for one stack

of laminates it was five euros or something – ridiculously dear.

"As a kid growing up I used to have the one-tear-off and you could have four of them on until it looked like you were glancing through the bottom of a milk bottle! So when laminates came in and you could run seven or fourteen for a race that was amazing," he adds. "Now some people will use 21 or 28. I used to have roll-offs a lot of the time so to pull away a tear-off and have this full, clear vision was fantastic. Roll-offs were not obsolete by any means then but everyone starting leaning towards laminates. Now it would have to be pouring down for me to use roll-offs."

"When my Dad [Harry Everts] raced they started with one tear-off, then it was three and then six with one tab up, down, on the sides and you had to remember which one to pull first or they all came off," recalls Stefan. "Then you had normal tear-offs but you could only put six on otherwise you couldn't see any more! The electrical roll-off was nice [Scott had a motion-sensor] and cool but it didn't work.

"I think a lot of goggle companies have been trying to invent something new – a new system >>

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Goggles can make all the difference when it comes to winning world titles



for lenses or how to put them in," the Belgian believes. "Then the laminates came and the roll-offs. One of the first roll-off systems, from Smith – in my eyes – is still one of the best ones.

"I remember the Smith Violator where you could put the lens in through the top and the roll-off was mounted on the goggle like Oakley have it now...and that was in the mid-1990s! It was a huge goggle and you could put in different foam thicknesses depending on the track conditions. It was crazy the kind of inventions were on the market if you look back over the years. The laminates were something that was very smart, cool and nice but at the end of the day we are affecting the environment and our sport is not so 'green' anyway! I think it will get banned and we'll just have roll-offs."

This summer it was Scott's turn again to make a major play in the market. Oakley stole

some thunder three years ago and has a dream roster of athletes that includes Dungey, Roczen, Tomac and Herlings while 100% brought design, panache and value and have their own locker of riders like Searle, Musquin, Webb and Stewart.

Scott had foraged around with eye-catching ventilation systems and a patented fit mode for their Tyrant model that permitted the rider to angle the frame to fit exactly on their face but with the recent launch of the Prospect they have already made play for the biggest field of vision and security through their lens locking system. The company have 45 years of experience in the field and manufacturing plants in the USA and Austria (weirdly in the same small town as KTM – Mattighofen) and have been able to turn around and innovate quickly with their products...even if goggles

are a more time-consuming due to the refined manufacturing procedure and the sheer cost of the moulds.

"It has been about two and a half years in development," reveals Chief Engineer of the Scott Sports Division Bertrand Didier, a man at the firm for 12 years and an authentic expert in all aspects of eyewear for a number of different sports and activities. "It wasn't just another goggle development. We knew it had to be a new high-end product to replace the Tyrant. We couldn't just do 'the usual' upgrades. We had to think 'out of the box' and I don't think we ever challenged the engineers and designers as much to meet our expectations and I don't think there is anything on the Prospect that compares with our other goggles. Face fit, lens shape, strap, lens lock; all these things are different. Maybe the way we clip the nose-guard in is the >>

Herlings opts for laminates on his Oakleys more often than not





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only similar thing!

"The big step for goggles in the last 10 years revolved around fit elements, so things like three layer foam and other material that we actually implemented in this product like Thermofoam and then sweat reduction through barriers and evolution with the thickness," he says. "Lens colours did not change a lot, neither did fit integration with helmets because something like that has to stay general and helmets have not changed vastly. So lens retention and field of vision were the big targets. Due to more powerful bikes and riders getting more athletic you are getting harder impacts on the lenses. This won't break the lens but it might make it pop out and this is one problem we wanted to tackle on the new goggle"

"It is not so easy to make goggles fit all helmets," says Scott Eyewear Product Manager Kevin Flier while holding the significantly larger Prospect in his hands with the WFS roll-off also bring a new industry reference point for size and canister position. "It looks easy now when you check out the frame and see with a 1cm

structure we include everything but the first prototype meant we had some bulky pieces. We had to work on the dimensions, how to mould and integrate the pieces. We did 3D modelling and printing for prototyping and even cut some pieces with scissors to get the right fit and compatibility."

Overall the amount of engineering and thinking behind a simple goggle frame is something of a surprise. "On the Prospect our main goal was to reach the largest field of vision, so we looked at everything we could do to achieve that – not only the lens but also the thicknesses and dimensions. It was a big commitment. We have more pieces – like the outrigger – so the manufacturing is not complicated but the assembly is one of the key factors."

It was a sizeable investment (moulds alone can cost up to almost half a million euros) and goggles now are starting to climb higher and higher in price for what is essentially a safety – as well as a practical – product. The Prospect – with a spare lens, laminates and a bag also >>

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There's nowt cool about having mud in your eye

in the box – comes in at just under 100 euros (around £75) but the Oakley's cost more while 100%'s offerings around the Racecraft and Accuri are definitely more wallet-friendly.

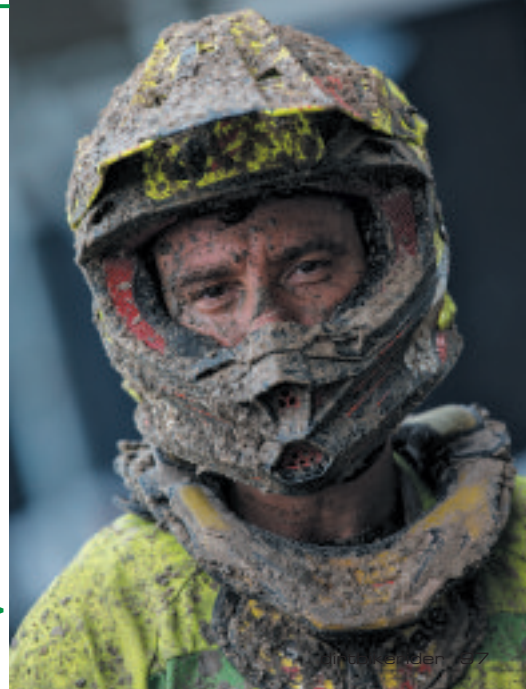
"When we said we challenged the engineers and designers it was not only on the final product but we knew it had to come in under the 100 euro mark," says Fleet. "We had to include all these cool innovations and they had to find a smart way to make it work for this price point. We had people on social media saying that it looks similar to the Airbrake but when we told them it was half the price and they were saying "how is that possible?" We had plenty of ideas for a goggle priced at 200 euros – like we do for wintersports – and for an engineer that's a dream and a nice playground!"

"As a Pro rider you are using them more than the average guy," says Simpson. "You're probably using double or triple the amount of times and they wear quicker. Where Scott has put their price in the market is pretty much right in the middle, so they will get a lot of sales

there. Other less expensive brands might use a cheaper grade of plastic for the roll-off canisters that are more likely to shatter or let you down. Things like the Lens Lock System does make a difference. Oakley came out with something right at the top of the range and they wanted to charge for it. I do feel that Scott's quality is as good as it gets...and they have priced it better. It is 2016 and 100 euros is where it is at for a set of goggles these days."

There are many options in dealerships and at a range of prices. For some, goggles are the most dispensable piece of their equipment. They cop plenty of abuse, from roost to muck and strap wear. In the racing world pro athletes find out very early on how crucial it is to be very particular and disciplined in regards to this area of their kit bag.

"I always prepared them very well and took a lot of pride in them," reveals Townley. "My Dad was always quite staunch on 'there's no point riding without goggles'. I think it was this year actually that he said it was the first time he >>>



ever see me take my goggles off and it was in England in the second moto.”

“It all starts with preparation and I believe in checking the goggle over, mounting the lens properly, mounting the tear-offs, placing any sealing strips, that roll-offs fitted correctly – there is a process and over time and with experience you know what to look out for,” explains Simpson. “I would say 99 per cent of goggle failure is through bad prep unless a lens pops out. I do think that goggles can cost you a race win or good result. If you are eating roost from someone the whole moto you need to be able to see where you are going! You need enough tear-offs in the tank and the roll-offs need to last to the end. I am really annoyed – no matter what the conditions – if I don’t make it to the end of the race without my goggles on.”

“The worst thing was using a brand new roll-off almost every race to lower the risk of it breaking,” says Everts. “It pissed me off that

I’d break the strap to pull it across. That first version was still the best – we used to take the dirty roll out and clean it and then roll it back up! You’d never see a rider do that now.”

“One bad memory was Suzuka [Japan] in ’92,” he smiles. “At the time we had three motos and we had a 30-second board and when that came up I broke the plastic strap on the goggles. I took off without any goggles and after one lap came into the pits but I didn’t have any spares prepped so I rode for three more laps looking pretty stupid but the roost was so bad. It was a tough one!

“Another time was at San Marino – in ’96 I think and I lapped Marnicq [Bervoets] in the second moto when he was leading the championship – and it was the year when we had a rainstorm just after the practice. I had almost finished the moto but had broken the roll-off film and when I wiped the goggle I had the tiniest field of vision but kept them on until

the finish line. I kept that goggle, mud and all, and added it to my collection.”

“Sometimes in the conditions we race in water can creep in or the lens fogs up,” says Searle. “You cannot ride with a snorkel! Sometimes it’s that wet on the track that you are going to have an issue now and again. 100% have the Forecast roll-off system that is very reliable and you can trust the goggles.”

“Throughout my career I was pretty strict on my goggles,” Townley states. “Every human head is different and I felt that the Oakleys ‘sealed’ very well on my face. At one point I had to change due to a team contract and had some issues with the fit. So it is important. The brands have really changed their game with roll-offs and not so much with tear-offs. It is a personal thing.”

Goggles are bigger and they are more resistant while also not compromising on vision quality and even style in some respects.



Dylan Ferrandis shows off Scott's new weapon against roost



Simpson thinks that companies are striving towards biodegradable tear-offs but some of the other people we spoke to in MXGP advocate the future importance of roll-offs. Where else can they go? If models like the Airbrake and Prospect are maximising universal helmet space then the walls are closing in for other gains and modernisation.

"I think we achieved all our objectives with this one," advocates Didier. "We have field of vision but ventilation is always a topic – is there something we can adapt? A good starting point for the next model is always 'what didn't change in the past few years?' It is quite an interesting process. For example: the face foam. It is something that pretty much every brand has but it is still a problem for riders because you see them with pads in their helmets. They need some very special materials and technologies and I think this is a way we can differentiate ourselves. It is a basic thing

but can bring a lot of function."

With modern dirt bikes and race bikes customisable at the hit of a laptop keyboard button, the issue of electronics is seeping further and further into motocross. It is a far-fetched proposition concerning rider's gear (a visible HUD in a rider's goggles or vision?) but it is also not an impossible one. Didier barely blinks when we raise the topic.

"I'm not sure...but it is a question that comes up and would maybe work. We had a HUD on a winter goggle five years ago and we thought about transferring it to MX. We worked with an external company and integrating the technology because we are not an electronics company. We know how to do eyewear, to produce and market it. Maybe it could work in connection with the bike and things like RPM and gearing? But then does it make sense? And how easy would it be to hook up with different bike models and the upgrades? We still have

some ideas of course..."

"There is that much going on in motocross that there is not much time to relax," says Simpson when quizzed on the possibility. "In MotoGP you might have a second on the main straight where you could look at something like that. In our sport there is not really a second where you can take your eyes off the ball...there might be a stone or something else in the ruts you need to avoid. I think you'd have to adapt the helmet or make the goggles even bigger to fit that in. I don't know if seeing the lap-times or something in your field of vision would be beneficial or even possible."

A pursuit of the masses but a sport far left of the mainstream; motocross is still the ideal petri dish for ideas and creation for those involved with a commercial and a passionate eye. Goggles might be some of the unsung heroes of a rider's cosmetic make-up but are further proof that the sport simply does not stand still.



The all-new Scott Prospect goggles helped take Clement Desalle to victory at the Assen GP



2016 VETS MOTOCROSS DES NATIONS

NICOLLODEON!

THE ENGLISH LEGEND TAKES CENTRE STAGE AND THEN STEALS THE SHOW AT THE 2016 VETS MOTOCROSS DES NATIONS...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Haggis Hartman

I clearly remember the last time I saw Kurt Nicoll race. It was in 1999 at Farleigh Castle and he'd come out of retirement to give the country's best riders a run for their money in what was back then known as the THQ British Championship.

So seeing him race this year's VMXdN at the historic Somerset circuit in a way feels nice and neat – as though it's bookended the last 17 years (or at least it would do if I hadn't watched him race the 2001 MXdN at Namur, for me a lost weekend shrouded in a fog of Jupiler).

Getting the 51-year-old to race was a massive coup for Dave King, the main mover and shaker behind the event. Last year he had double world champion Trampas Parker as the headlining act and other MX luminaries who've turned a wheel at Farleigh since the VMXdN was first held in 2009 include Jean-Michel Bayle, Georges Jobe, Jeff Ward, Rob Lechien, Graham Noyce, Neil Hudson and Dave Thorpe.

They're all undisputed legends of the sport but Kurt brought something else to the party this time around.

For me Kurt's almost a mythical figure. By his own admission he was at times unapproachable during a career that saw him finish runner-up in the world 500cc championship on four occasions and since 2006 he's been based out of the way in Southern California.





Dave Thorpe, Dave Nicoll and son Kurt. Between them they have three 500cc world titles...



Sure, DT won three world titles – but he’s still very much part of the scene with his Buildbase Honda team – and Bayle and Jobe were, let’s be honest, the enemy when they were racing GPs while Ward and Lechien were based thousands of miles away. But Kurt? For anyone who followed motocross in the ’80s and ’90s – basically the majority of fans who turn out in their thousands for the VMXdN – Kurt’s the man they want to see.

And he’s not only doing the parade lap – he’s actually racing! And not just the Evo VMXdN – he’s taking on American super-Vet Doug Dubach in the Over 50s Evo class. What could be better? How about him running 1-1-1 to record a resounding win on his ’89 CR250?

“I had good starts in the [Over 50s] races which I didn’t have in the VMXdN motos and it was great to be able to win and great to go over the finish line first at Farleigh,” he says. “It was perfect really.

“I’ve been blown away by the reception I’ve been given. It’s humbling really to realise the effect I had on a lot of people in the ’80s and ’90s. I had no idea.”

Of course, Kurt isn’t the only big name racing. He’s joined by Jeff Emig, John Dowd, Jamie Dobb, Grant Langston, Gordon Crockard and Brian Jorgensen among a whole slew of blasts from the past who help turn back the clock over the two days.

Heavy rain on the Saturday washes out the programme after one block of racing but not before it claims Kurt in the opening Evo VMXdN race when, with the first Over 50s win in the bag, his bike grinds to a halt in the team event.

“I wish it hadn’t rained,” says Kurt. “Saturday morning was really good and I had a great time. Practice was great, the first race I did was great but I’m not so comfortable in the mud anymore because I haven’t ridden it for about 10 years. I tested a lot with the bike but I never tested it in the mud or rain and water got in it somewhere and she stopped.”

This is only my second VMXdN but I’m a huge fan. It’s laidback and friendly – exactly how I remember motocross being before the top-flight game started worrying too much about how it was perceived. For want of a better word it’s honest. It’s also a great

opportunity to catch up with some faces I haven’t seen for years.

Flaming Moe Szyslak – aka Mark Jones – is a case in point. The former factory Honda rider turned out for the Welsh team and I bump into him on Sunday as he’s watching the racing.

Now 37 and running a successful MX coaching business as well as owning a pub, Mark’s typical of many of the retired racers who are at Farleigh – still fast as f**k but breathing out his bumhole after the first few laps.

Racing a KX500 – “I thought I’d be best going for something a little bit tamer because of my fitness!” – he’s an impressive fifth overall in the individual Evo VMXdN competition and actually leads the final race for a couple of laps.

“I’m enjoying it but I’m a little bit frustrated as well because I know what I could be doing but obviously I can’t because of the arm-pump and the fitness,” he says. “The last time I went off a start gate was 2009 at Lyng when I retired and I’ve ridden maybe six or seven times on a track since then so I haven’t done a lot but in the last couple of weeks I’ve been out about three or four times.



The prestige of the VMXdN makes riders hungry to compete – hungry like a Wulf!



RINGER ALERT!

It's Brian O'Jorgensen

The fastest man of the weekend is Brian Jorgensen whose 1-2-2 card sees him run out overall winner in the Evo team races and elevate Northern Ireland to second overall.

Maybe not an automatic pick for the Northern Ireland team – he's Danish after all – Brian's inclusion causes a few headaches for Gordon Crockard who'd forgotten to field a team after getting the entry form through in February.

"Dave King asked if I could take Paddy O'Jorgensen and I said 'no problem' so that's how it came around," he says. "Brian's a friend of mine and this event's all about fun."

"I was worried actually. Before the last race someone came up to me and said we were lying second and I thought 'oh f**k, this is just going to flag up the whole Jorgensen thing'. I was so embarrassed on the podium because if it hadn't have been for Brian we wouldn't have been second."

"What was hilarious was England were third and Dave King's the English team manager. I had to ask him 'Dave, should we be up here?' and he said 'yes, unless there's an official protest!'. But it's not a serious thing – you've got to remember what we're all there for."

As far as the 2001 British champion and GP winner is concerned, racing the VMXdN was too good an opportunity to turn down.

"I've been invited the last couple of years but in 2014 I was riding in the US for the World Vet and it didn't fit in, then last year I did the Legends in Italy," says Brian. "So it's been on my schedule to try to do this because I think the event brings good memories for me, coming over here and racing in the UK again. It's just been a matter of trying to fit it in with my training schools and my family."

"The conditions definitely remind me of racing in England! I have many good memories and I also remember all the rain we had. I haven't raced in the mud since 2006 when I stopped my professional career because now I have the privilege not to go out so I don't have to clean the bike after."

"It's all about racing and trying to do your best and having fun. I last raced at Farleigh Castle in I think 2000 when Mike Brown won the championship."

"Shaun Copeman who runs the Welsh set-up has been asking me for a few years to come along. I've always told him that I'm not prepared enough and blamed old injuries but then I figured I'd never be ready so I might as well say yes. I started riding about two weeks ago and I'm doing my best but arm-pump is a bit of a factor and lack of lung capacity is another."

The Crockstar, who hasn't raced since the 2015 VMXdN, is straight out of the same mould as his former rival...

"I had a good laugh with Mark," says the 2001 world 250cc #3. "We were talking about how you just can't come back after not racing for so long and expect to be fast. Your arms just pump up straight away. The only way is to actually get out and get practising and do a load of bike time but that's an awful lot of commitment."

"You can't just pop out of retirement and come to this reunion event and expect to be on form and race to your best. I've been going here for six years now and I do enjoy it. I'm trying to find the balance of just going there for a bit of fun and going there and trying to do well. It's frustrating to go there and struggle on the bike –

it's not fun, just don't go so fast seems to be the solution."

Mark and Gordon are in good company – 2001 world 125cc champion Jamie Dobb's feeling the pace as well during a very rare ride out.

"The reason why I retired is because of my hands," says Dobby. "I can't hold onto the bike so it doesn't matter how much training I've done, I've still got the same problem."

"At the end of the day I can't expect too much with how much I ride. In the last moto I came from I think seventh to fourth on the first lap and halfway round I literally couldn't feel my hands because of the problems that I have but it is what it is. Everyone in front of me rides a lot and I've only spent an hour on a bike in the last year."

Jamie, who rode for Team GB in the MXdN eight times from 1989 until 2000 and was part of the trio that got on the podium for the last time 19 years ago, is instrumental in his country's third overall at Farleigh with two last lap passes in the final race.

It almost didn't happen though after a crash >>

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in Sunday morning's first Twinshock VMXdN moto.

"I was pinned in third or fourth gear across the straight at the bottom of the steps. A back-marker was going straight all the way and then at the last minute he came over on me and I hit the back of him. I just went cartwheeling and landed on my head and then the bike came down on my ankle.

"I rung my bell a little so rather than going straight back out because I only had 10 minutes to get ready for the next race I decided to give it half-an-hour or so to get straightened up.

"I wasn't sure if I should go out in the final race but I thought I should give it a shot. It was cool that I could actually do something for the team and get those extra couple of positions and knock America off the podium.

It worked out at the end of the day."

Dobby's not the only former world 125cc champion who finds himself on the ground thanks to a lapped rider – Grant Langston, the Y2K champ, also bites out when another back-marker swaps in front of him.

The 34-year-old South African, a regular rider in California where he now lives, had been at the front in Saturday's race before falling foul of the conditions.

"Saturday was pretty muddy and had a lot of elements that I'm not used to like the track, the KX500, the mud," he says. "It was an adventure but I actually kind of enjoyed it but, unfortunately, I stalled the bike and couldn't get it started which cost me probably a podium finish."

His Sunday activities end abruptly – you can find helmetcam footage of it on DBR's >>



MY VMXdN...

Geoff Walker

SR75 Molson Racing Suzuki team boss Geoff Walker ends the weekend fifth overall in the Twin-shock Under 50 class and even leads the second moto after passing an upside down Todd Dehoop.

"It's a weekend off and the vibe here is very nice and it's a fairly local event for me," says the West Country-based Irish DBR test rider. "We've had an absolutely full-gas year so far and this is the first chance I've had to come and have a little crack myself.

"I did it I think four years ago on the same bike I'm on this weekend which is a 1980 CR480 which belongs to John Ford from Surfing Life who's kindly offered the bike again

after it had a massive reconditioning from Chris Elderfield. It's nice to revisit the bike and revisit the race.

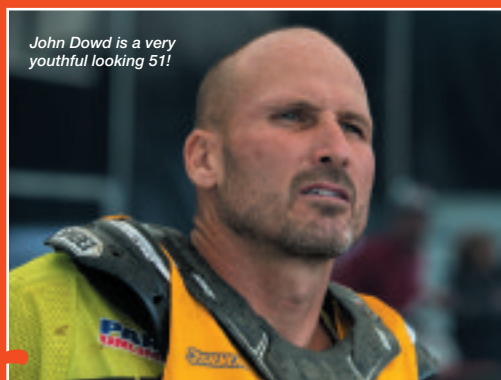
"The first race on Sunday was good and it was very tremendous to lead a race – I'm a bit devastated to be out-pulled up some of the hills but I'm more than happy, in fact I'm ecstatic. I ride a lot with all the testing but I haven't raced for getting on for two years – motocross is not something that pops up all that often so it took a bit of time to get into it.

"I had a little stall on Saturday and these beauties take a minute to get going again so you lose a bit of time but everyone generally has one moto that goes a little wonky.

"I'm under pressure from the boys because Thomas [Ramette] won on Saturday night in the South of France."



Kurt Nicoll rattles on through some glorious Farleigh ruts



John Dowd is a very youthful looking 51!



MY VMXdN...

John Dowd

A VMXdN regular, the Junkyard Dog may be 51 but chances are he's still faster than you and the record-breaking US vet runs 1-1-1 in the Twin-shock Over 50s class and wins the final Evo VMXdN race.

"It's my fourth time and I'm pretty excited," he says. "It's a lot of fun and it's an honour to be here. I love coming over and it's just cool being part of the programme. Saturday was messy but, typically, I've always been okay in the mud and luckily I got a good start so the race went okay for me.

"The last three times I've been over it's been pretty nice so I had it in the back of

my mind that we were due for a sh*t one and I guess we got it.

"I love the passion for racing the nostalgic stuff here and I love seeing all the old racer guys. I've raced with some of these guys back over the years and we don't all see each other much anymore. It's really cool to see the old GP racers – a lot of those guys I never got the chance to meet or race with and I remember a lot of those names from when I started racing and it's kinda cool.

"I broke my hand earlier this year so I haven't had a chance to do a lot but I guess I've been riding for about three weeks to get ready for this so I'm probably struggling a little bit with conditioning."

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Belgium dominate both the Evo and Twinshock VMXdn team clashes

Facebook page – but he's still happy to be part of the big occasion.

"I know guys who've been here in the past who've said it was pretty cool so it was one of those things where I said 'yeah, let's go to England and race'.

"The thing is in California it's so easy – you don't even have to wash your bike when you're done. It's convenient. If it's too hot I don't ride, if it's wet – which hardly ever happens – I don't ride. I'm a fair weather rider now.

"I'm only here because Dave King is so persuasive. I've no desire to race. I still enjoy riding but it's hard because of old injuries and a lack of motivation to keep training – it's a sport where you have to be fit – but the history and the legacy and the coolness behind the event was enough to get me here."

The VMXdn is a true labour of love for Dave King who throughout Saturday's torrential rain remains as cool as the proverbial cucumber.

"Saturday was very stressful – it was the first time in eight events that we've had a wet one so we could only do one block which was a disappointment but totally the right decision," he says. "That was to preserve the track.

"We did three races in the wet and could see the track was going the wrong way so it was >>



MY VMXdn...

Jon Barfoot

Jon Barfoot, a British 125cc championship contender in the '90s, got a late call-up to Team GB after problems with the squad selection and the 41-year-old Essex plasterer put in a string of solid performances on his 1987 ATT Racing CR250.

"I was over the moon when I got the phone call from Dave [King]," says Jon Boy. "Obviously, there were a few issues with the other boys but it was nice to be brought in. On Saturday the heavens opened up and it was a bit of a lottery – it was more a survival thing really – but I kept it rolling and managed a 29th which wasn't too bad.

"In race two I got a good start and was running about seventh into the first corner," he said. "Then someone came up the inside of me and another rider came across from the outside and took my front end out and I ended up getting run over about three times which is always handy – but it's great to be out there for England."

MY VMXdn...

Jordan Booker

The VMXdn isn't all about old riders racing old bikes and 23-year-old Maxxis MX2 racer Jordan Booker – who swept the Evo 250cc races – is typical of the young blood that fancies a piece of the action.

"It's a bit of a funny story – it goes back to a friend's Christmas party last year," he says. "John May's been winning the 125cc class here for the last few years and he gave me a bit of smack talk saying there's no way I'd beat him on a 125 around here so the original plan was to try and have a bit of a race with John.

"I phoned up and couldn't get a space in the 125s but my mate's dad Mark McGill had a 250 Evo '89 Honda built up and he lent me that.

"I've been coming to watch for years and I've always wanted to do it but I don't have my own bike so I've never had the chance so when I was given the opportunity I couldn't really turn it down. This is the most fun I've had racing all year so I'm glad I'm here – I was meant to be somewhere else but the team was fine with me coming here and having some fun. I'm loving it."



MY VMXdn...

Doug Dubach

With an astounding 25 World Vet titles under his belt, Doug Dubach is an iconic racer and a top bloke to boot...

"It's been a little up and down for me so far," admits the American after Sunday's first Evo Over 50s moto. "I've had some good motos but I had to leave my bike back in the bushes in that last one after a lapped rider got in my line but that's racing.

"It's still a lot of fun – the people are great and the whole event's worth coming to regardless of the result.

"I still ride quite a bit but the last time I rode a track like this was last year and it wasn't muddy. It's probably been 20 years since I last rode a track this wet."





Gary Parker shocked many of his '90s fans by not racing a Husqvarna or wearing a green jersey...



John May was on rails in the 125 Evo class

MY VMXdN...

Ryan Voase

Battling Brit Ryan Voase overcomes problems with his KX500 to take a gate-to-flag win in the second Evo team moto – not a bad performance given the 37-year-old is making his comeback from a serious injury sustained at the start of May.

"My ankle's not too bad – I snapped all the ligaments – but I've had to dig deep to come here. It's my first race for over four months and I've only ridden the bike twice beforehand. I love this event and if it was anything else I probably wouldn't have ridden so I've dug in for it.

"I qualified second so I knew I had the speed and I got all my lines. In the first race I got the holeshot and me and Jorge were neck-and-neck into the second turn but he just pipped me and absolutely roosted me.

"I lost my vision and got hammered a little bit and dropped back but got up to fourth with a lap to go when I slipped off

on a corner and couldn't start the bike and ended up finishing 22nd. It was a bummer but in those conditions it's a bit of a lottery.

"The second race was mint though. After Saturday to bounce back with a victory with the standard of some of the guys in the race – I was on top of the world.

"I knew Brian would be very strong – he's an incredibly naturally talented rider – and when I knew he was coming I thought he'd be the guy to beat. We were neck-and-neck on the first lap and alongside each other through the tunnel so it felt really good to beat him going head-to-head. I was as pumped as I could be to win that race.

"I was happy with getting third place and the team getting on the podium but we've won it for the last two years so at the same time I'm a bit disappointed. The last race was shaping up to be a real good one for me but I got a stone in my goggles which smashed my lens so I had to cruise it home but I knew if we all had a good finish we could get third."



Rain couldn't dampen the spirits of the huge entry

the right decision to cut it and if anything I'm enjoying it even more than usual. We've never had a muddy one but, you know, this is England."

With races still to run on the 2016 edition the Dorset builder is looking ahead to 2017.

"I've already started planning for next year and working with riders – just the same really, pestering everybody."

This isn't a report so if you're looking for results best pick up the appropriate issue of TMX or point your PC at MyLaps but – spoiler alert – Belgium wins the Evo VMXdN competition from Ireland and Team GB.

It's only fitting that we leave the last word to Kurt who fully lives up to his star billing and as well as reaffirming the support of his old fans wins a fair few new ones – especially after beating his nemesis Doug Dubach in the Evo Over 50s.

"It's been great. I felt like I rode really well most of the weekend – I don't think I rode too good when it was really muddy but I felt very comfortable when it was dry. Doug's from California so I could race with him in the mud, even if I couldn't race with everybody.

"It's a great event. I can't believe how huge it is, how many riders are here – it's really fantastic. It's a shame about the weather but everyone's making the best of it.

"Getting third was great. We had a really bad start with Ryan [Voase] crashing the first day and not being able to start his bike and I got water in the electrics so I thought we were going to be destined to be well down and then everyone rode really well on Sunday.

"Dobby did an amazing job on the last couple of laps of the last race and managed to pass two people and that got us third place. It was very, very good and I think it was my best performance in the Nations races once it had dried up a bit. I passed a couple of people on the last couple of laps so we managed to just sneak it."



MY VMXdN...

Jeff Emig

Take away the home advantage and Captain Kurt would face some serious rivalry in the fan stakes from Jeff Emig.

The 1997 250cc AMA SX and Nats champ is a youthful-looking 45 and is still blisteringly fast – although he goes better on a twin-shock than his Evo machine.

"This an event that's on the calendar that I haven't done before so I wanted to check it off the list," he says. "Obviously we've had some bad weather this year and that's taken the edge off it a little bit but every time I talk to Ryno or Dowd or Dubach or Stanton or any of the guys they've said that it's super-fun.

"With my new partnership with Husqvarna as global brand ambassador there was the

opportunity to ride some Husqvarnas here and so they've made it really easy with Andy Elliott supplying the Evo bike and Kris Rosenberger supplying the twin-shock. It's just a bit different.

"It's maybe a bit more of a level playing field with the twin-shock. I was a bit ambitious choosing to ride a bone-stock Evo bike – it's all original, no modern parts on it at all.

"The circuit's interesting. I've never ridden anything like it before. I feel like I've got the deluxe package. I wanted the full British motocross experience and I certainly got it.

"I don't ride all that much anymore but now that I've signed this new deal with Husqvarna I'll be riding the 250 two-stroke more and I'm doing an event on the one-twenty-five two weeks from now at Washougal."

MY VMXdN...

Paul Coward

Still a regular competitor, most notably in the Acerbis Amateur Nationals where he's a front-runner in the Vets class, former British championship regular Paul Coward finished the weekend sixth overall in the Evo 500s.

"I was racing here a fortnight ago in the Acerbis series but it's totally different conditions this weekend," says Paul. "It was an absolute nightmare on Saturday to be honest but I got a good start, got out in third and moved up to second before dropping back to fifth but I was very happy with that.

"I've ridden here every year and I love it. I'm lucky to keep getting an entry."

MY VMXdN...

Gordon Crockard

Third in the 2001 world 250cc motocross championship behind Mickael Pichon and Chad Reed, Irish ace Gordon Crockard is a regular at the VMXdN.

"I only rode one class this year which is not normal for me," says the Crockstar, who was out on his own '89 CR500. "I'd usually ride three classes which gives you so much track time and so much track knowledge. You get the fun of riding the track – which is what everyone's really there for – and then you get to learn the course which helps with results.

"In practice the ground was the hardest I've ever seen it. It didn't cut up, it was bone hard and very fast and I didn't particularly enjoy the high miles per hour.

"Then when we did the race it was a wash-out – absolute torrential rain – and I didn't enjoy any of that experience, riding around with no goggles and wrecking my bike but 10th place was fine and I had my usual dramas as everyone did. It just wasn't nice putting those poor old bikes through those crappy conditions.

"Sunday came around and the ground hadn't dried out that much at all and the first race was in very sticky mud. I finished 13th in the first race which wasn't really what I wanted but I made a rubbish start and was about 30 seconds behind after about the third corner.

"The final race was the first time I started to get in the groove and started to feel like I'd got some lines and was enjoying the course and started to get some pace. It was all over very quickly for me – I had 10 laps on Saturday and 12 laps on Sunday. It's not a lot."

Gordy, who worked closely with Kurt Nicoll during his ill-fated 2002 season on a factory KTM, is disappointed not to spend more time with his former team boss.

"I only saw Kurt on the podium and he said 'I haven't seen you all weekend' and I answered 'that's because I've been so far behind you!' I wish I had have spent a bit of time with him because he was a hero of mine and I worked under his management at KTM. From what I can see he seems totally relaxed and is really enjoying himself which is lovely. It's good to see."



Kurt Nicoll went 1-1-1 in the Over 50s Evo class

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NATS WRAP!

MX NATIONALS, BRIDGESTONE BSMA AND JUDD RACING CUP ROUND-UPS...

Words and photos by **Mike Gurney**

Silverware was dished out left, right and centre during September including the MX Nationals titles.

Grabbing the Gaerne Smallies crown as well as the Michelin Cup – for the highest points scorer running that brand's tyres across all classes – MBO Power's Ike Carter went out on a real high at Hawkstone taking another clean sweep which was his third of the series. Going 2-2-2-2 at the Shropshire finale, season-long top chaser Bobby Bruce finished a more than worthy title runner-up as Louie Kessell fought off the rest taking a solid championship bronze.

In the Biggies, the final round moto wins went to Rossi Beard and overall victor Sam Nunn as Joel Rizzi – the clear points leader – topped the championship pile. After a couple of injury dogged seasons this was a glorious turn around for Rizzi as Beard nailed series silver despite dropping a round. Nunn took bronze.

The closest call of all came in the Talon MXY2 division where Michael Ellis claimed the title. Taylor Hammal parked his 125 in favour of a 250F and gave it big licks running 2-2-3-1 at Hawkstone to take the overall win. Although he reduced the points gap at the top by 25 he ultimately finished 18 points

short. The other moto wins went to Zander Brown and Dexter Douglas. Hammal ended as runner-up in both the 125cc and MXY2 championships – Charlie Beamish took the smoker title while Jamie Carpenter totalled in series third.

On the same weekend at rain lashed Penybont (as if they hadn't already had enough bad luck with the elements this year) the BSMA championship wrapped adding just one more block of racing. Shaun Mahoney convincingly lifted the Auto title, the 65s crown went to Tyler Jai Smith as Ben Watkins claimed the SW85 class glory. In the BW85s Callum Beekan topped the lot as Owen Woodhouse and Iuean Harris proved top dogs in the Seniors.

Over at East Trax they had a bit of the wet stuff to deal with too as Kieran Boughen lifted the Master Kids Junior 65 title with six wins from seven starts. Billy Moriarty and Ashton Boughen respectively completed the podium as Aaron Cheffings lifted the B title – the C group winner was Alfie Twells.

Archie Jay Girdam – despite a no score in race one – went on to top the Auto A podium beating off Ryan Waggott and Charlie Richmond respectively. Harry Shand was the Auto B supremo as Tyla Mabika claimed tops in group C.

While not quite a September finale, the fallout from the Judd Racing series spilled over into the month as confusion lingered about some final points totals. At the end of the 'discussion' organiser Claudio Bernardinelli had to make some public apologies – the biggest to Calum Mitchell and family. In 2017 the MX Premier Cup will run under ACU regulations with Claudio taking a back seat on race weekends.

The happy smiling faces at the Sherwood finale were Archie Jay Girdam and Calvin Kelly – they nailed the two Auto crowns with a promise of new 2017 KTMs coming their way soon. Bailey Johnston finished as a clear cut Junior 65s champ – ditto Jack Grayshon in the Smallies. The BW title went to Danny Clarke as he moved up from fourth to first after all the maths had been done. As for Calum, although injured he turned up to collect what he had been told would be a winner's trophy – only to find himself in series second.

In the MXY2 Rookies impressive Howard Wainwright bagged his second title of the season as Jake Curtis Stevens powered his way up into the runners up berth. In the 125cc Rookies Kurtis Griffiths won out over Drew Anderson and Jack Wankling with a final round super show.

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Ike Carter has been almost unstoppable all year



Michael Ellis rails a berm at Pontillas



Danny Clarke aces the MCF Biggies series



FINAL CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS MX NATIONALS

SW85

- 1 Ike Carter 567, 2 Bobby Bruce 494,
3 Louie Kessell 453, 4 Olly Davidson 314,
5 Brad Nolan 309

BW85

- 1 Joel Rizzi 457, 2 Rossi Beard 394,
3 Sam Nunn 390, 4 Josh Peters 354,
5 Kacey Hird 338

125cc

- 1 Charlie Beamish 485, 2 Taylor Hammal 470,
3 Ben Clark 456, 4 Charlie Cole 205,
5 James Meikle 192

MX Y2

- 1 Michael Ellis 479, 2 Taylor Hammal 461,
3 Jamie Carpenter 448, 4 Dylan Woodcock 348, 5
Jed Etchells 308



MX PREMIER CUP

Auto under 7

- 1 Archie Jay Girdham 1338, 2 Zane Stephens 1304,
3 Alfie Cooper 1184, 4 Hayden Statt 1182,
5 Daniel Goodman 1170

Auto under 8

- 1 Kalvin Kelly 1310, 2 William Haddock 1298,
3 Spike Stevens 1250, 4 Ryan Waggott 1098,
5 Brandon Buckley 1078

Junior 65s

- 1 Bailey Johnston 1355, 2 James Barker 1134,
3 Joel Fisher 1116, 4 Joshua Bassett 1090,
5 Riley Keene 1044

SW85

- 1 Jack Grayshon 1340, 2 Jack Scally 1157,
3 Alfie Rickwood 1147, 4 Sam Atkinson 991,
5 Charlie Palmer 988

BW85

- 1 Danny Clarke 1180, 2 Calum Mitchell 1170,
3 Tom Murphy 1137, 4 Dane Reeves 1057,
5 Declan Hunter 1034

Rookies 125cc

- 1 Kurtis Griffiths 1343, 2 Drew Anderson 1337,
3 Jack Wankling 1291, 4 George Simpson 1143,
5 Lewis Taylor 1001

Rookies 250F

- 1 Howard Wainwright 1389,
2 Jake Curtis Stevens 1220, 3 Harry Pritchard 1200,
4 Jamie Osborne 1164, 5 Thomas Townrow 989



Howard Wainwright and Kurtis Griffiths are both #99 and both Premier Cup champions too



Wallace Cup

FIRST blood to James Fry as S3 Parts national series kicks off

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Webb wins...

...BUT Jonny Walker retains SuperEnduro series lead in Mexico

ON TOP OF THE WORLD

JONNY WALKER WINS IN ARGENTINA



RAMETTE RETAINS AX TITLE

THOMAS KEEPS CROWN AT WILD, WILD WEMBLEY



THOMAS KEEPS CROWN AT WILD, WILD WEMBLEY



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TERRIFIC TIM DOUBLES UP AT QATAR GP OPENER



GEORGIA



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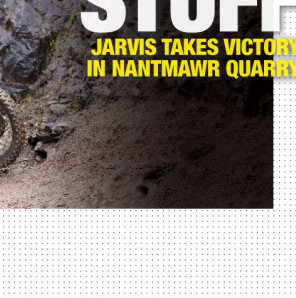


Arlington SX

FOCZEN gets revenge in Texas but Dungey's still in control

TOUGH STUFF

JARVIS TAKES VICTORY IN NANTMAWR QUARRY



Telford Show

IT'S advantage vintage as classic exhibition turns back the clock



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SPOTLIGHT ON...

ARCHIE JAY GIRDHAM #100

DOB: 21/05/09 | HOMETOWN: SCUNTHORPE, Lincs | SPONSORS - R GIRDHAM ROOFING, MICKY ECCLES MX TRAINING, FIDDY PARTS, CFX SEATS NEW ZEALAND, DECADE EUROPE, FLOW FAMILY, KIERADEN PARK, BMCO LTD.

After lifting the MX Premier Cup Under 7s title Archie Jay Gridham is this years MCF British Champion and such was his outstanding series show he also won the top individual points scorer trophy. Finishing his championship season with another glory weekend on the top step at East Trax was a great way to sign off too. Just before Archie celebrated yet another podium success as part of Team 90 winning the MCF Team Event at Mildenhall, Rage caught up with him along with mum Emma and dad David.

Rage: Hi Guys, congratulations on a great season. At the start of the year did you have any idea how well Archie would go? And is it true you had to tell him to slow down a bit at the MCF series final round?

DG: "Before the National season started Archie had been in training with Micky Eccles and was just about getting some good results at club level racing, was progressing more and more every time he raced and trained so we just decided to give Nationals a go. And Yeah, I did have to tell him to slow down a bit at Sherwood. He was up front way clear in his own class and wanting to race the leaders in the older class."

Rage: Was there a turning point where you realised

Archie was maybe a potential champion?

DG: "The turning point for us was watching Archie race the Mepal winter series. He had been with Micky lots at FatCat and Grantham MX and definitely didn't let the Mepal track conditions bother him. There were plenty of big offs Archie wouldn't give in though - he took his first ever race win and after that he was on fire."

Rage: With one full National crown and the recent Master Kids title under his belt is Archie now done with racing at 50cc level?

EG: "Archie hasn't decided yet. He has a 65 but has only been on it a couple of times. If he gets going on it confidently then I don't see him going back on the 50 - at the end of the day though it's his call."

Rage: Hi Archie, high fives for what you achieved this year. Tell me some of your favourite memories?

AJG: "My favourite meeting was at FatCat on my birthday in May. In with the older group I qualified fastest of all and finished third four times. I had a big off in the last race though. Winning my first ever race at Mepal in the winter series with EASCC was special too. My favourite race of the year is the last one at Master Kids 2016 at Mildenhall. I took the holeshot, led for three laps and finished second

- I was so proud of that."

Rage: Who's been your toughest and most respected rival?

AJG: "Kalvin Kelly is tough to race against and Zane Stephens is someone I had to watch out for in my own age group."

Rage: What's the master plan over the winter months?

DG: "There's no pressure on Archie, just get some more training in with Micky then see how it goes with the 65 maybe some winter meets."

Rage: "Thanks for all that guys! You get the final shout Emma - what's the Team Girdham message?"

EG: "The Girdham camp is never negative, even if we think Archie hasn't ridden like we know he can, we will find a positive. Archie is his own worse critic - he can finish in good positions and still say he was riding rubbish. But for us our seven year old boy is amazing and his determination and hunger for MX is incredible. He wakes up on race mornings, fist pumps his chest and says 'it's in here, I am going to be the next Jeffrey Herlings'. Archie would like to thank everyone who supports him and especially his uncle Chris who at the drop of a hat helps Dave with the bikes."

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TIMMY!

Coming up next month we've got the youngest ever MXGP world champion – and the first rider to win back-to-back FIM gold medals in different classes since Greg Albertyn did the deal back in 1992-'93 – lined up for an exclusive chat with Adam Wheeler who'll also be delivering a piece on the intensity it takes to compete in the motocross world series. We're also sending radical Ryan Houghton to Belgium to ride and report back on the Factory Suzukis of Ben Townley and Jeremy Seewer – it's gonna be awesome! So if that sounds like your thing – and if you're reading this then it pretty much has to be – we'll see you then, then...

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